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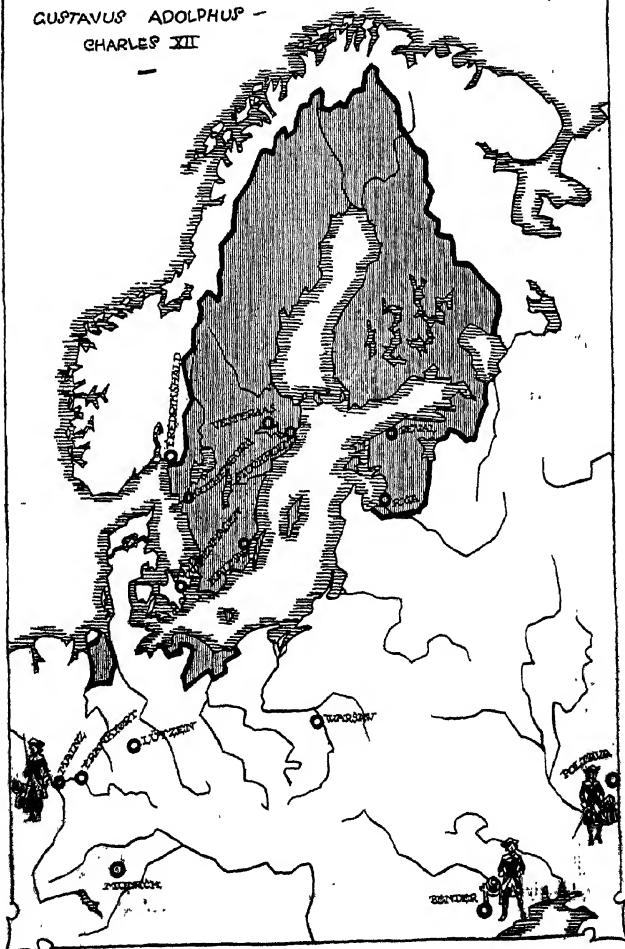
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THE DAYS OF WORLD POWER

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS -
CHARLES XII

The map illustrates the territories of Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII. The territories of Gustavus Adolphus are shaded with diagonal lines, covering Sweden, Finland, and parts of the Baltic coast. The territories of Charles XII are marked with dots and labels, including Stockholm, Copenhagen, Lübeck, Hamburg, and Amsterdam. The map also shows the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea. The map is drawn in a simple, sketchy style with a decorative border.

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS -
CHARLES XII



SCANDINAVIAN CLASSICS

VOLUME XXV

THE SWEDES AND
THEIR CHIEFTAINS



ESTABLISHED BY
NIELS POULSON

THIS series of SCANDINAVIAN CLASSICS is published
The American-Scandinavian Foundation in the be
that greater familiarity with the chief literary mo
ments of the North will help Americans to a be
understanding of Scandinavians, and thus serve
stimulate their sympathetic coöperation to good e



Drawing by E. Berggren

GUSTAF VASA A FUGITIVE

THE
Swedes and Their
Chieftains

BY
VERNER VON HEIDENSTAM
—
TRANSLATED FROM THE SWEDISH
BY CHARLES WHARTON STORK



NEW YORK
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TO
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
CROWN PRINCE GUSTAF ADOLF,
HEIR TO A GLORIOUS TRADITION,
THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE TRANSLATOR.

“THERE were many who thought that after the war nationalism would be snuffed out like a smoking tallow dip,” said Verner von Heidenstam in an address before Scandinavian students last June; “but instead it has flamed into a beacon. Even the revolution in Russia had a national basis and without it would have been unthinkable. There is really something which may be called the historic task of a people, which is not merely a subject for speeches over the brimming bowl on festive occasions. Reduced to its embryonic form, it is simply the will to live, in other words, to preserve our individuality. . . . It is our individuality that lends beauty and charm to our culture and gives us a sense of well-being in our own country. It is the source of our strength, the measure of our will to live, and our contribution to the common progress of humanity. If we are to mean anything to others, if from our distant rockbound coast we are to fling out some little gleam of light across the waters, it must be through our individuality.”

In this spirit Heidenstam has written a group of creative works based on Swedish history. Beginning in his boyhood, his imagination has been fired by the thought of the great men and women of his own race. He was born, in 1859, at Olshammer manor, which was originally named Ulfshammar after Ulf Lagman, the husband of St. Birgitta. From his home he could hear the bells in the convent of St. Birgitta at Vadstena. The shores of Lake Wettern and the forest of Tiveden, where again and again the fate of the Swedish people has been decided, were the haunts of his boyhood. In his early manhood, however, he passed a number of years abroad, and his admiration for the Orient and the culture of the Latin countries is apparent in his works of that period. But as the years passed, the sense of being a Northerner reasserted itself in him. He went back to Sweden, to the very spot where he had dreamed his boyhood dreams. That he also returned in

spirit was shown when, in 1898, he published *The Charles Men*, a cycle of stories woven around the heroic figure of Charles XII. His next work was a short novel, *The Pilgrimage of St. Birgitta*, a poetic interpretation of the life and character of the greatest woman in medieval Sweden. This was followed by two novels under a common title, *The Folkung Tree*. The first of these, *Folke Filbyter*, dealt with the very beginning of the Swedish nation, the second, *The Bjälbo Heritage*, with its consolidation as a Christian state. Finally, Heidenstam, in 1909, gathered the ripe fruit of his historical studies in a large work, *The Swedes and Their Chieftains*. Intended chiefly for young readers, it traces the history of Sweden from the Stone Age to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Though fully historical in its facts, it is written with a poet's breadth of vision.

From the two volumes of the Swedish edition, Mr. Stork has selected for translation the parts that deal with the high peaks of Swedish history, the stories telling of people and events that have more than local significance, playing a part often in the history of the world. Each story is complete in itself and can be read without reference to what goes before or comes after; but for the reader who would like to see the high peaks in their relation to the surrounding landscape, an historical note has been added at the end of each chapter. For these notes the secretary of the Committee of Publications is responsible.

A fuller discussion of Heidenstam's life and works will be found in the introduction, by the Swedish critic Fredrik Böök, to Charles Wharton Stork's translation of *The Charles Men*, published by the American-Scandinavian Foundation in 1920.

THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS.

CONTENTS

The Chieftain with the Unnumbered Stone	
Axes	3
Adils and His Goldsmiths.....	34
Ansgar, the Apostle to the North.....	52
St. Erik and the Abducted Maiden.....	63
Birger Jarl	70
The Battle of Hova.....	83
Engelbrekt	92
The Little Sister.....	103
The Battle of Brunkeberg.....	110
Young Lord Sten.....	116
Stockholm's Blood-Bath.....	137
Gustaf Vasa.....	152
Days of Victory.....	174
The Key of the Baltic.....	208
Filling the Nation's Coffers.....	222
The Charles Men.....	238
At Venerable Upsala.....	284
A King of the Arts.....	292
The Hundred Years' Peace.....	319

The Chieftain with the Unnumbered Stone Axes

THE PEOPLE MURMUR

THE SNOW fell continuously, hanging on all the branches and concealing all the paths. It was impossible to see or to find one's way amid the swirling gusts. For many days everything in the wood had been completely silent and dead.

Only at evening was there heard at times a distant murmur as of a hundred voices. Then on one particular evening the sound came wilder and more dismal than usual.

The shouts came from a clearing in the woods. There was a circular space surrounded by mighty boulders, which was wont to be called Ura-Kaipa's Place of Sacrifice. Amid these boulders a troop of thralls with lighted torches had stationed themselves. From time to time a gust of wind would catch up a whole swarm of snowflakes and hurl them back high up toward the tops of the pine trees. Then for an instant the light would fall clear on the hut of Ura-Kaipa in the middle. This was covered on all sides with human skulls and stone axes. The skulls, which were suspended by what hair still remained on them,

Swedish Chieftains

swung to and fro in the blast and clattered against the stone axes.

In the doorway a man sat on a stool. The thralls waved their torches and shouted every time they caught sight of his red hood and the necklace of bears' teeth which extended row on row as far as his shoulders. No one else was adorned in such a fashion. This was Ura-Kaipa. His face was beardless, but his hair stood out in all directions. So also did the shaggy tufts on his fur coat, which was sewed together from many skins of various animals.

Ura-Kaipa and some of the elders of the tribe were about to make a sacrificial feast. With a practiced blow of a small club they broke the marrow bones which lay before them on the stone of sacrifice and sucked out the marrow. They then flung the bones to the thralls. Finally they began to cast lots for one another's weapons and adornments.

The chief of this tribe was always called Ura-Kaipa. The tribe had been more powerful of old, but another people, who lived in the surrounding region and who because of their splendid weapons were called the Yellow-Shining Folk, were more and more pressing the people of Ura-Kaipa up toward the woods.

Behind the chieftain's stool stood a youth with

Ura-Kaipa

the brightest of bright hair. It was evident that this youth was not a kinsman of Ura-Kaipa but one of the Yellow-Shining Folk from the other side of the lake.

The name of the lad was Karilas. One day a long time ago he had met Ura-Kaipa in the woods and they had become friends. Both of them had been boys then, though neither of them knew how old he was. They could only count up to nine, the highest that any one in the woods could count in those days. Men were wont to reckon on their fingers, leaving out the thumb with which they counted. The folk of Ura-Kaipa's race grew old faster than did the others. Hence it was that, while the chieftain sat there with a man's brown and slightly furrowed countenance, his friend was still but a half-grown, slender youth.

"Karilas, Karilas!" cried the elders with a mocking, scornful tone, for they envied him for the favor shown him by the chief. "Why do you stand there hanging your head? Come and cast lots as we do!"

The youth kept his place behind the stool without moving. Then they began to jeer. "Ah well, to be sure," they went on, "what have you to stake, you who are a stranger and an orphan? Your clothes, perhaps, and then you could go naked in the snow."

Swedish Chieftains

Karilas blushed resentfully and came forward. He knew that he possessed nothing in all the world but himself and the friendship of Ura-Kaipa. "I stake myself as thrall to the winner," he retorted reckless with anger. "But if I win I'm to have a new fur dress with belt and daggers."

Ura-Kaipa looked at him reproachfully. "Then I will play against you," he said hastily, for he feared that some one else might win his best friend as a thrall.

With that he stuck his hand into a pouch and drew out a bit of stone which he cast in front of him. It proved to be red in color, which indicated that he had won.

The elders immediately gripped Karilas by the shoulders and forced him down in front of the stool, where Ura-Kaipa had to set his foot on his neck. "We are thy witnesses," they said with unconcealed joy. "Now thou hast taken the yellow-shining stranger to be thy thrall."

It seemed to Karilas as if something like a blow had separated him from his own body. What was he now that he could no longer have mastery over his own body? His anger past, he understood how stupidly he had behaved. There was at best some consolation in that Ura-Kaipa was the one to be his master. Ura-Kaipa sighed

Ura-Kaipa

slightly but was afraid to show his weakness. "Get up there," he said, "and go off to the thralls!"

After that the chieftain spoke but little. But the snow continued to fall, and when it grew late the elders gathered once more about the stone of sacrifice.

"We have shouted incantations," they grumbled, "and yet the snow does not cease. Though it is getting on toward spring and the nights are shorter, the snow stands on all sides as high as a wall. Loose-grained as it is, it will not bear skis, and we cannot go hunting. The thralls are hungry, and soon there will not be a dry stick with which to keep up the fire in the huts. This is no land for human beings. Sun, sun, have you abandoned us? Will you never more come back?"

Ura-Kaipa raised his arms. "No, this is no land for human beings," he said. "Sun, have you hidden yourself in the shadow dales under the disc of the earth to send up only gray mist instead of daylight? Above us are no longer stars, only whirling snow. Ice-death, hunger-death, it is you that are drawing near us."

When the thralls heard the lament of the chieftain, they trampled on their torches and cried in turn, "Sun, sun, have you abandoned us?"

"You ought to try yet another sacrifice, Ura-

Swedish Chieftains

Kaipa," counseled the elders. "But for it you must choose the handsomest and noblest of your thralls. That is Karilas. We will meanwhile send scouts upon the mountain to see whether the sun is not coming."

Ura-Kaipa was silent, but he turned away when the priestesses of sacrifice came with Karilas and led him on the stone. They then took two logs and placed them one on either side. They bound his hands and feet firmly, so that one hand and one foot was secured to each of the logs. The priestesses were very old women, deeply bent. Like all the others they wore clothes of wild beast skins, but instead of being shaggy the garments were painted with black and white streaks and circles. The chief of the priestesses then stabbed the victim in the shoulder with a stone knife, but only very slightly, so that she got a few drops of blood on the flinty point.

Ura-Kaipa received the knife from her hands and went into his hut with the elders. The ground inside was paved with slabs, which were well swept, because there was nothing that the Ura-Kaipa Folk despised so much as earth. The hands of the chieftain might never touch it, and none of his followers would work in it. "We who hunt, fish, and pray to the sun," they were wont to say, "how should we respect the earth

Ura-Kaipa

mould? It is made of rotted plants and beasts, and therefore is unclean."

In the middle of the floor a hide lay spread over the sacred well. Ura-Kaipa rolled this aside with great formality and held a stick of resinous wood so that it shone in the water. In the other hand he held out the knife with the drops of blood. A cold, damp puff of wind rushed up, and the elders trembled and shrank back a little.

"Do you see him?" they whispered. "It's the thunder hammer that the heaven fire threw at the giants to help the Ura-Kaipa Folk."

"I see him," answered the chief and bent lower. Down in the water he caught the glimmer of a rock, which had the shape of a hammer and was the size of a wolf huddled together in sleep.

"Does he open his eyes, does he want blood?" they continued to whisper. Ura-Kaipa swung the pine stick to see whether there was a gleam in the shaft-hole that had been cut in the middle of the rock. But there was no reflection; it remained dark.

The chieftain breathed more lightly, for he thought of his friend outside on the stone of sacrifice. "The thunder hammer sleeps," he said. "Let us wait till to-morrow!"

"To-morrow, to-morrow," repeated the elders as they departed to the other huts around the cir-

Swedish Chieftains

cle of boulders. The dogs continued to spring about the enclosure with whining barks, but in the end they too crept in among the people in the huts.

KARILAS ON THE STONE OF SACRIFICE

Karilas was left lying on the stone without being able to move. The snow piled up higher and higher on his breast and over his entire body. It collected on the sides of his head, over his forehead and eyes and mouth.

One of the priestesses came back, brushed the snow from his face and let the light of her torch shine upon him. He thought this was done in pity and that her hand was soft and kind as that of a compassionate mother. But when after a long pause she came a second time and he turned his head slightly to look into her eyes, they sparkled evilly as those of a nocturnal bird of prey. He shut his eyes quickly.

He tried to think, but his thoughts continually struck against something white and impenetrable, as against snow. This was because he knew nothing of the world. He could not think more than nine years back and nine years forward. Beyond that all time was closed to him. Nor could he think more than nine days' journeys in any direction. Beyond that the world was closed. There was nothing else. In the midst

Ura-Kaipa

of this little, confined world, which was filled with snowdrifts, he now lay on the stone of sacrifice alone and deserted even by his friend. "No, this is no place for human beings to live," he sobbed.

He grew sleepy, for the snow coverlet no longer chilled him and he felt a lively warmth in all his limbs. He thought: "It is still long, very long till morning, when my helpless body will be cut to pieces with the flint knives."

After he had lain a good while in this way, he began to ask himself in his slumber why the priestess did not come back and brush off his face. She was at least a living creature. He tried to open his eyelids, but they were frozen together so that it pained him when he tried to get them apart.

He did not recognize himself. The gray-white dust of the flakes was gone, and the stars glittered free and clear in endless multitudes on the black cloth of the world tent. Farther down toward the woods they shone more pallidly and were enveloped in a reddish mist.

"Those are my ancestors' eyes that look down on me so kindly," he thought. "This must be death, since it is so beautiful. You are dead now, poor Karilas. Perhaps that was the best thing for you. And yet I could weep that you, who were so young, might not live a little longer. But"—

Swedish Chieftains

his lip curled a trifle—"now let the priestesses—hateful beasts!—come to me with their knives to-morrow!"

He was surprised that he could plainly hear when the thralls came running out and calling to each other. Ura-Kaipa too came out. Now began a wondrously solemn strain of music. The thralls moved their fingers with incredible speed on small drums, so as to make a sound like the rising wind which ended in a stormy roar. All stood turned in the same direction and staring at the same spot. Here now rose slowly a glowing red bubble of light, which cast two long beams in under the snowy pines. It was the longed-for sun, which finally ascended into a clear sky. From the south came a flock of wild geese, their breasts aflame with the light from beneath.

Karilas was frozen so stiff that he had no feeling when the priestesses were meanwhile freeing his hands and feet. Only when they shouted into his ears did he comprehend that he was really still alive. "Your sufferings in the night have roused the sun," they said, "and therefore we do not need to take your blood. Set yourself among the thralls and learn how to work!"

URA-KAIPA'S STONE AXES

After so many days' anxiety it was pleasant for the thralls to get to work again. My! what

Ura-Kaipa

a rapping, though one took it easy even in the midst of the hurry. There was a proverb: "We have plenty of time."

Some of them baked earthen jars on which they had traced decorative patterns of lines and dots. The jars were round at the bottom and could not stand, but neither were they meant to, since they were hung up in the huts by cords of rawhide. Some were putting resin on wooden boxes till they were watertight. Others scraped at skins till they became soft and comfortable as garments. The women tore apart dried deer sinew for thread and began to sew with needles of bone. They made very even and good stitches.

But most of the men sat in a circle and beat with granite stones on pieces of flint so that shard after shard fell off, until a knife or an axe or a spear point had been formed. They then gathered together the fragments and set them as arrow tips. All their weapons and tools were of stone or bone, and the stone axes were their special pride.

Karilas sat himself among the farthest group of thralls, who had the hardest work. They were preparing the battle axes for Ura-Kaipa. If a thrall finally became so skilful that the chieftain hung up his axe as an ornament for his hut, it

Swedish Chieftains

might be that as a reward he would also be given his freedom. This Karilas knew.

They were mostly aged thralls. One of them had just died during the hunger days, and his axe remained there properly broken and sharp, lacking only the shaft-hole in the middle. Karilas laid it on the ground between his knees. The old man who sat nearest him showed how he should work. The man's name was Fish-Eye. "It is easily learned," he said, "and we have plenty of time. You have only to set a sharp piece of bone against the axe as a borer and twirl it between your hands fast, fast."

On top of the borer Karilas tied a stone so as to give the motion more force. "When I have got so far as to make a chief's axe and have become free," he thought, "I may stand again with Ura-Kaipa." With that he made his borer whirr.

When he had been at his task a while, however, he could not find the smallest depression in the axe, only a little circle scraped white. "You must keep pouring water and sand on the axe," advised Fish-Eye. "It is the sharp sand that bores."

Karilas obeyed, but the palms of his hands began to burn. The pain rose higher and higher up through his arms. "I have been at it half a day," he finally panted out, exhausted, "and still the axe is not pierced. I have bored from both

Ura-Kaipa

sides. Look at it here! The holes have not met."

"Half a day!" exclaimed Fish-Eye. He had round blackish weals on his hands, so that they looked like dogs' paws. "We have plenty of time. I don't know how long I have been ornamenting this handle of my battle axe for Ura-Kaipa."

Karilas was silent. When evening set in again, he asked: "Fish-Eye, when do you think you'll be finished with your axe?"

"Two years it will be at the very least," replied the old man. "The worst thing is I'm beginning to get lame in one arm, so I don't know if I shall ever be done with the axe. If I'm not, well, then I've slaved for nothing. Then I'll never be a free man. But you are young and may very well succeed, if you have patience."

Next day Karilas was stiff in the arms and sat in front of the axe without touching it. The elders passed around to examine the work of the thralls, and when they came to Karilas, they burst into a fit of anger. "You are not good for much, you thrall," they stammered, and taking up earth, they cast it on him to show their contempt. Their whole bodies trembled, and they opened and shut their hands.

A couple of thralls sprang forward and plucked off their hoods. On their bare heads each had a

Swedish Chieftains

little lid fastened over a round hole, which was bored in the very skull. Such a hole was held in great reverence and befitted only the most distinguished men of the tribe. Through this the evil spirits could slip out, and when the men were dead, the sunlight could shine in and suck up their souls.

They rattled the lids, letting out the evil spirits, and thereupon grew calmer again. "O chief," they said, while the thralls replaced their hoods, "you must submit Karilas to the great ordeal."

The workers now dropped their tools, for they remembered all too well that it had gone ill with all who had been condemned to the great ordeal.

"Do you require this of me, too?" answered Ura-Kaipa as he stood in his doorway. "See! Karilas, your arms are weak and useless. Why should we clothe and feed you? Show me whether your understanding is stronger than your body. If you can measure the wealth of Ura-Kaipa, you may live. Then you will have withstood the great ordeal. Can you count Ura-Kaipa's treasures? Can you tell me how many stone axes hang on his dwelling?"

Karilas went quickly forward, plucked down nine axes and laid them in a heap. The thralls burst into laughter. "Yes, all of us can count

Ura-Kaipa

that far. But what next? Where will you get to now?"

Karilas stood in doubt. Then he took another nine axes and laid them in a fresh heap.

The thralls and elders shook their heads, not comprehending what he meant. But he continued to take down the axes, laying each nine in a separate heap, until there were nine heaps. "Very good so far," cried the elders, "but there are still axes on the house of sacrifice."

Karilas then took down the last two axes and laid them apart by themselves. He waited a while in hesitation. Suddenly the riddle became clear to him, and he burst out fluently: "Ura-Kaipa, you have nine times nine axes and then two."

A murmur of wonder was heard from the thralls, and Ura-Kaipa drew with his finger in the air a hammer, the symbol of the lightning. "Up till to-day Ura-Kaipa's stone axes have been considered uncountable," he said, "but I have long observed through this youth that the Yellow-Shining Folk on the other side of the lake have high gifts which are hidden from us. Shame were it to take the life of such a thrall."

KARILAS IS SOLD TO THE TRAVELING MERCHANTS

The snow began to melt. When the ice was gone, merchants came rowing up the rivers with

Swedish Chieftains

flints and amber to barter for furs. They were grim and wild fellows, who sat at night by their fires down beside the shore.

One evening Ura-Kaipa came quite alone and took Karilas with him. They went down toward the shore, both keeping silence.

"This youth here is the one thing in life that I care for," thought Ura-Kaipa gloomily. "I can no longer endure to have my best friend as a thrall, for it is forbidden to talk kindly with a thrall. I cannot go on from day to day bearing such a burden." But aloud he said finally, "It is hard to see in the dusk under the boughs; I must take your arm, Karilas."

The heart of Karilas leaped for joy when he felt his friend's hand on his arm. In that moment he would have gladly given his life for Ura-Kaipa.

"Go faster!" bade the chieftain, to make an end of his own inner strife. "I have no need of your counting art, but the merchants might use such a thrall."

The merchants sat on a chest, which they always kept watch over. In it they took along something which was so precious that they were wont to sell it only to the richest of those on the other side of the lake. When Ura-Kaipa noted that they had recognized him, he said:

Ura-Kaipa

"Poor is he who has no thrall, for he must do everything himself. But he who has thralls may have all done for him that he will. I offer you here my best thrall in exchange for a little of that which you have there in the chest."

"Though you came with four thralls, it would not suffice for such a matter," they answered. "but since your friendship to us has also some worth, Ura-Kaipa, we will agree to the exchange." They opened the lid a trifle, just enough to let them feel out what they sought. It rang on the edge of the chest and shone as if in the middle of the summer night they had had a bit of the sun between their fingers. It was copper and tin, which had been melted together into a small bronze ingot.

Karilas felt that his friend let go his arm. There he stood now, alone and sold away. He turned his head a little to look after Ura-Kaipa as long as he could. The chieftain was already on his way home, staring as he went at the object of barter, which he turned over and over in his hand. But when he came out on the highest cliff, he stood still, tormented by pangs of conscience, and threw the bit of sunlight away into the water. No one should think that he had sold Karilas for base gain. Leaning forward

Swedish Chieftains

and walking with spiritless tread, he then vanished behind the trees.

When the dawn came and the mists lifted, the merchants were already out on the lake with their newly-purchased thrall. One of them dipped his hand in the water and passed it over the charred interior of their oak log boat, which had been hollowed with fire. He then rubbed the hair, face, and neck of Karilas vigorously, so that he became sooty and dark all over. "The Yellow-Shining Folk will not buy one of their own tribe as a thrall," the crafty merchant said to the others, "but now we can easily sell the lad, perhaps at a good profit, for now he looks like one of the Ura-Kaipa Folk."

Karilas sat and looked toward the opposite shore, where he had roamed as a child but which he had almost forgotten since. A yellow summer light fell over the fields of grain and the stacks in the enclosures, which shone out prosperously from under the sacred ash trees. The houses were round, daubed with clay, and had conical roofs. There were swarms of people. He was dazzled and gave a start, roused by something that he at once recognized: it was the ring of bronze trumpets. The folk were in the midst of celebrating a festival on the shore, and their spear points and battle axes gleamed

Ura-Kaipa

like colored sunbeams, for everything was of bronze. Their clothing of soft white wool with yellow edges was adorned with brooches. The largest bronze shields were inlaid with dark rosin. The women wore long neck-ornaments of bronze rings, and their abundant hair was held up with horn combs and nets of yarn transparent as a spider's web.

A wagon approached, surrounded by death-doomed prisoners of war. The merchants hastened to draw ashore their dugout and sold Karilas on the spot as a sacrifice. Amid threatening strokes of their daggers they forbade him to speak, while they demonstrated to the people that he was dark-hued like all of Ura-Kaipa's stock.

Two garlanded girls hastily threw over him a garment of softest wool and set him among the victims around the wagon. It was drawn by a pair of white heifers, which had blood-red harness with splendid bronze buckles. On the front of the shafts hung the likeness of the sun-wheel crossed by four spokes. Upon the wagon was a closed tent of cowhides. In this was carried the image of the Earth Spirit, for the Yellow-Shining Folk did not despise the earth, as did Ura-Kaipa's hunters and fishers, but called her the consort of the sun.

Swedish Chieftains

The doomed men pulled the wagon a little way out into the water and washed it reverently. Then one after another was commanded to lift a fold of the tent. This was forbidden to any other living being, and as soon as a man had looked in on the Earth Spirit, he had to die.

Karilas was the last. He drew the heavy flap aside, but it was dark within the tent. It seemed to him that he could distinguish only the whites of two fixed and superhuman eyes. He stood motionless, stiff with terror. One of the flower maidens then bent aside the water-lilies and came out to him. Kindly and sister-like she gave him the ice-cold kiss of death on both eyes, so that he had to close them. Then she pressed him down under the water and stood on his breast, while all began to sing a mournful song.

But when this had proceeded a short time, she motioned eagerly that they should be silent. She bent down so that she could plainly behold Karilas as he lay on the sandy bottom. "Stop, stop!" she commanded. "A great wonder has happened beside the Earth Spirit's chariot. We put an Ura-Kaipa thrall under the water, and he was sooty and black, so that I shrank from quenching his eyes with the kiss of death. But now his hair has grown bright in the water so that he has become one of us. But none of us freeborn folk

Ura-Kaipa

may be sacrificed as a thrall. And yet he has seen the face of the Earth Spirit."

"He is the only living one of us who has seen it," responded the men, and their weapons rang as they bowed humbly. "Since our chieftain has just been laid in the burial mound, this is assuredly a sign that the transformed youth shall become a chief to lead us in new victories over the Ura-Kaipa Folk. It is cramped for plough-land here, but on the other side of the lake are wide arable dales."

The maiden thereupon raised Karilas and bore him back to the sward, but he was half dead. He had seen the rigid whites of the Earth Spirit's eyes; he had twice seen death, and when he now began to speak it was with the wisdom and seriousness of a man.

There was motion and activity in the thriving villages, where all made ready for a warlike expedition. The trumpets rang early in the morning, and the merchants' yellow metal had a good sale. Skilful craftsmen made moulds of clay and poured in the molten bronze. Afterwards when they broke the moulds, there lay before them the most magnificent weapons as good as perfect. "Take what beseems you, chieftain," said they, and presented the best of them to Karilas. "Helmet and sword have now come into the world;

Swedish Chieftains

helmet and sword for the warrior, plough and mattock for the laborer."

URA-KAIPA'S MELANCHOLY

Meantime all was silent and still in Ura-Kaipa's encampment. He himself barred himself up in his hut, gloomy of mood, tortured by seeing the sun-wheel roll every day across the heaven tent.

The elders went in, ranged themselves about his stool, and clattered with their head-lids. "Drive away your melancholy," they bade, "and enjoy yourself among us! We have plenty of time. Lay bare the hole in your head and let the evil vapors fly out!"

But he turned himself to the wall and pressed his hands to his breast. His brown face had become lean and hard.

"Ura-Kaipa's sorrows are not such as you can heal," he muttered. "He had for friend a son of the Yellow-Shining Folk. Though Karilas was hardly more than a boy, he already knew much more than we and was nobler and more high-born than other men. He spoke with Ura-Kaipa of his tribe and made him ashamed and put longing in his breast. And such a youth you made a thrall! Fetch earth and strew it over my head so that I may become unclean!"

Ura-Kaipa

He suddenly sprang up, snatched a little stone knife and hid it under his belt. "It was as a punishment that Karilas came to us," he continued; "a punishment because we grew lazy and made earthen jars and had our own fire. Formerly our ancestors roamed about with their bows and often had scarcely a tent to sleep in. And wherever they went they bared their heads to the stones that were biggest and most wonderful."

"That they did," replied the elders. "Everywhere stood mossy stonegods, deep in mountain ravines, high up on the slope and out in the fields of the Yellow-Shining Folk."

"And by night the fires of sacrifice flamed," whispered Ura-Kaipa, "and no stranger dared to approach. Aye, thus it was in former days. Ura-Kaipa will no longer dwell among you. He is going forth into the woods to dig his night lair under the snowdrifts as his fathers learned to do from the wolves. And when he lies in the snow and the stars shine clear, he shall not forget the oath that he now makes. He shall hate Karilas, he shall be revenged upon him who took away his peace."

With a piercing cry he rushed out of the hut and hurried on under the boughs. He ran crouching and swiftly, as only trolls and Ura-Kaipa Folk can run.

Swedish Chieftains

THE YELLOW-SHINING FOLK COME

One day in the late summer the Yellow-Shining Folk drew near in their sharp-pointed boats of hide. One might have thought that a strip of land had loosened itself from the opposite shore and swum out on the water, so great was the throng of vessels. Ura-Kaipa's thralls, who had never dreamed of such a sun-glow from men, climbed in terror up in the pines. What frightened them most, however, were the shaggy black dogs which leaped ashore from the first boat and ran about in a dense pack. If one stood still, at once they all stood still. They did not bark like dogs, but whimpered like wailing children.

Fish-Eye alone held his ground and took pride in his courage. "These are neither dogs nor babies sewed up in dogs' skins," he said; "these beasts are called sheep." One bright night he had chanced to go astray to the other shore, where he was held prisoner for several days, so that he had some knowledge of the domestic animals over there. But as he stood talking, a woolly beast came rushing from the boat and gave him such a blow on the knee-joint that he was fain to grasp a bough and climb up. "That was a ram," he groaned, "the special beast of the herdsmen and of the Thunder God."

Out of the next boat clambered heavily and

Ura-Kaipa

clumsily a couple of trolls with bristles, which ran their snuffing noses into the ground and then made off at a gallop. "What disgraceful fat witches!" exclaimed the thralls. "They are not ashamed to grub up the earth with their very faces." But Fish-Eye related that the witches were called swine and were held in great respect by the Yellow-Shining warriors. "Terrible men they are," he added, "though they have clothing of summer clouds and weapons of sunbeams."

The thralls supposed that this was all, but with that landed the third boat. Behind it swam two monsters which might have passed for moose if they had not been of a brindled color and if their horns had not been narrow and cleanly shaped like polished bows. When they were led up through the bushes by a rope of hide which was bound about their horns, they opened their mouths and emitted a bellow that rang like the deepest war trumpet. "Those are kine," said Fish-Eye, "and they are the holiest of all the animals over there. When one of the chieftains dies, he is wrapped in a cowhide. What is there that those people do not hold in honor, from the sun to the dust of the earth!"

"Not you," answered Karilas, who had also come ashore by now. All the boats had been gradually poled in under the cliffs. Stones rained

Swedish Chieftains

from the slings of the thralls, but the warriors held up their shields for defence. When the thralls perceived that they could do nothing, they ceased to fight.

At first they did not recognize Karilas with his shield before his helmet. They thought that all those from the other shore were alike, but presently they noted by his voice that it was he. With that he came yet closer. "Me, the free-born, you set among the thralls," he said. "But now it is I that take you as thralls, and henceforth you shall work in the dust of the earth with the sweat of your brows. But one I will spare. With him will I share my power over you, because he was once very dear to me. Where is Ura-Kaipa?"

The thralls dared not answer.

He then understood that Ura-Kaipa was no longer there. With lowered head he turned back through the luscious grass down toward the valley. The warriors had already cast aside their weapons and were harnessing the cattle to the plough. Before its sharp blade the flower maidens set a cake of bread, which it was to cleave first of all for a symbol of good harvest. Karilas took the plough-shafts, and the team began to pull. Heavily, slowly, solemnly was opened the first furrow in Ura-Kaipa's blood-drenched place of sacrifice.

Ura-Kaipa

A rustling sounded in the hazel bushes. It was Ura-Kaipa, who stood hidden there with his knife. It had become worn and then ground afresh so that there was only a short bit of flint left in the handle. With the spring of a squirrel he threw himself upon Karilas and struck at his throat. "Hated one," he rasped, "hated one!"

Karilas reeled back, but by now he had grown and become stronger. He took a firm hold and lifted Ura-Kaipa aloft so as to hurl him on the ground. But therewith he felt that the former chieftain was so weak and wasted with hunger that he lay almost helpless in his arms. In pity he set the other down beside the furrow. "You have fared ill in the wilds," he said, and gave him a piece of the cloven bread. "Eat the fruit of the soil!" But Ura-Kaipa turned away in disdain.

Karilas took his head between his knees and gently smoothed the stiffened wrinkles, but Ura-Kaipa's eyes stared fixedly toward the Stone Gods. Karilas then realized that he was dead.

"The Wood Folk here are wont to bury their chiefs in the huts where they have lived," said Karilas, "but do you build him a mighty tomb according to the custom with us and say the peace-word over his memory."

The plough kept on turning the turf in a wide

Swedish Chieftains

circle around the place of sacrifice, which it thus took into its possession. While this was going on and for many days after, a chisel rang on the mountain wall somewhat farther away. A skilful craftsman in the band of Karilas represented there all that had happened in the conquest of the district. Here were depicted the long row of boats, the fighters, and the landing of the domestic animals. But no one as yet knew how to carve any word or name. The actual occurrence was all that was to be remembered. One and all could see the pictures on the slab, and later any one might interpret them as seemed best to him.

URA-KAIPA'S FUNERAL FEAST

The thralls were now commanded to roll together some of the boulders that stood in a circle round the place of sacrifice. They then laid an oblong block above for a roof and stone of sacrifice, heaping up earth and gravel round about.

When the tomb was ready, the elders, who had kept hidden in the woods, returned. They carried in Ura-Kaipa and set him with his back against the wall. Between his feet they made a fire, over which they hung a boiling kettle. Thereupon the elders sat down before their dead chief to hold the farewell feast with him. The priestesses stood on the roof of the tomb, softly swaying the roof-stone, for it had purposely been so

Ura-Kaipa

laid that when it swung it made a ringing sound.

In the stone were carved a multitude of small grooves, which they smeared with fat and filled with burning resin. Many small, slender flames curled up on high, and behind the stone rim rose the moon, though without spreading any radiance, for it was a bright midsummer night.

Below in the clearing, where the flower maidens had scraped together the newly-cut grass into a soft bed, lay Karilas and his warriors. Bronze helmets gleamed on the tree branches, and the skalds sang to the vigorous plucking of the strings. When from time to time they rested against their harps, the noise from the feast above was audible.

"You eat not, Ura-Kaipa, you drink not," cried the elders from within. "You speak not with your guests. Have we not but now raised you upon your stool, so that the last sunlight could shine in through the hole in your head and suck up your soul? Have we not given you new garments and set meat-jars and weapons about you, so that you might not stand naked and empty in case you wanted to go out some night and hunt?"

While they were speaking they broke in pieces the earthen plates from which they had eaten. The fragments gritted under their feet, as they

Swedish Chieftains

went out and covered over the entrance. "You have got other things to think of and you have plenty of time," they continued. "You sit and wonder whence they came of old, the conquering people who have the sunlight ever with them in their weapons. We know well, Ura-Kaipa, that now you would be alone."

But the fire still burned within under the kettle by the dead man and shone through the chinks between the stones above.

"Whence did we come of old?" repeated Karilas, holding out his hand as if in a question now toward the south, now toward the east. "Skalds, which of you can answer Ura-Kaipa? Who can answer the riddle? Long have we dwelt here already, and slowly have we learned how to make our yellow-shining weapons. I only know, skalds, that none of your ancient sagas of wandering tells of such a bright and lovely summer night as this, and that here we will make ready a land for men to live in."

NOTE

The exact time when the Swedes, the "yellow-shining folk," came to what is now Sweden is not known, but historians are convinced they were there several thousand years before Christ. They came from the south. The people that settled in the region around the great lakes were called Goths, and the name still persists in Östergötland and Västergötland. Another

Ura-Kaipa

group called the Svear penetrated beyond the great forests, Tiveden and Kolmården, and made their home north of Lake Mälär on the fertile plain now known as Uppland. There on the banks of the river Fyrisån Swedish history began, on the spot where still stands the university town Upsala. There lived the most renowned of the local kings, and there stood the greatest heathen temple in the Scandinavian North. Gradually the Svear conquered the neighboring tribes and gave their name to the entire country.

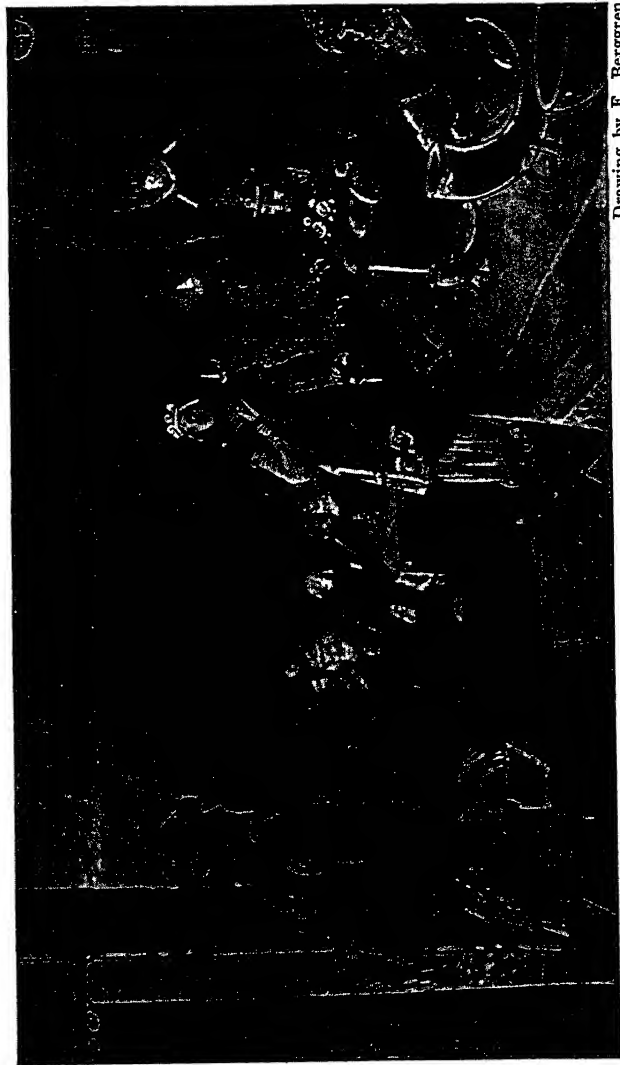
Adils and His Goldsmiths

A LONG TIME had now passed since the fire had gone out under the kettle in Ura-Kaipa's tomb. On the plain at Fyrisån had gradually grown up a town which was called Upsala, where the Svear gathered in great numbers for sacrificing and bartering.

They had worn out many swords in battle with the Goths, who lived farther to the south below the forests. Large bands of the Goths had meanwhile gone out on raids to foreign countries, and their dwellings became gradually richer in plundered treasure than in armored men. Finally there came a night when their most famous chieftains lay slain on the field under a flame-lit heaven, and the victorious Svear decked their horses with captured ornaments. The Goths chanted a mournful song, telling that their beautiful women might no longer wear rings about their necks, nor their warriors be roused by the strains of the harp.

THE COURT OF KING ADILS

Between crooked mountain ridges spread an overgrown swamp, where it was no longer possible to splash one's way through with a skiff. Dwellers in the woods around, who could no longer get any fish in the brown marsh water,



Drawing by E. Berggren

THE HALL OF KING ADILS

Adils and His Goldsmiths

soon discovered, however, that there was something else to get which they could use. This was rusty lumps and clods of marsh ore.

Many smiths therefore assembled in the summer, living in huts of branches which they set up on the shore. They constructed furnaces by placing large stones in a circle. On these they laid wood and ore in alternate layers, started a fire, and tramped at their bellows till the ore melted and was run off into small ingots. These could then be put upon anvils to be welded and forged.

The entire work was directed by a master smith who was famous far and wide and was called Tole. His apprentice was named Öjar. "Now iron has come into the world," cried Öjar one day, smiting with his hammer so that the sparks flew up into the tops of the firs.

"Something else has come into the world, and that a long time since, though it may be news to you," responded Tole, whereupon he summoned the other smiths to his hut. There lay helmets that he had adorned with bronze plates, and the very finest swords. The treasures in his smithy were not only decorated with circles and streaks, but Tole knew how to construct interwoven figures of animals and even of heroes and gods. But it was none of all these things that he wished to

Swedish Chieftains

show to-day. Instead he held out his hand. In it lay two small yellow grains.

"This stuff is gold," he informed them, "and it is the most valuable thing there is. If I had but as much as I could hold in my hand, I could build myself the biggest kind of hall with pillars and a dais, and chieftains would sue for my friendship."

Öjar had sprung forward with the others and had listened eagerly. His master now turned to him with the words, "How often have I not talked with you about King Adils and Upsala, rich in gold, where gold and copper are thrown into the funeral mounds. He has gold inlaid in the iron of his spear, gold over all his sword-belt, gold on his helmet, gold on his drinking horn; and when he sits with his men, he shakes his dice in a golden cup."

Tole paused a moment so as to enjoy the amazement of his sooty audience. He then continued, "Hails to Adils, son of the Skilvings, the mightiest of the Svear! He has sent me these grains. More he dared not trust to our wilderness. He would know whether I thought I could work in such a material and if I could mend for him the famous ring Sveagris. Haste on ahead to Upsala, you apprentice, and tell them I am coming. You know I go but slowly, crooked and feeble as I am in one leg."

Adils and His Goldsmiths

Öjar made a great leap of joy and betook himself off, bare-footed and bare-legged.

It was late when he came in among the many houses of Upsala, and he selected a sleeping place in a barn. No sooner did he begin to doze than he began to dream of the gold which Tole had described. The hay stuck into his legs and through the rents in his shirt so that he soon awoke once more. As soon as he fell asleep, he saw nothing but gold, but every time the hay would prick him so that he started up. He rose impatiently and went out.

The sky was bright red, although it was the middle of the night, and under the tree of sacrifice a number of silent men went about, raking. He spoke to them, but they put their fingers to their lips and whispered, "It is the day of Thor that is about to break. Don't you know that it is forbidden to speak loud or to exchange any unnecessary words on such a holy day? If you seek the sacred spring, blacksmith, you will find it there behind that big tree."

After that they paid no further heed to him but continued their raking. He went eagerly forward to the spring and saw that the whole bottom was gleaming with precious objects which had been cast in.

He at once took up water in his hands and

Swedish Chieftains

washed his face, though the soot dripped down and troubled the spring. Moreover his skin was so discolored with years of smoke that he remained almost as black as before. "To wash oneself with such water must give one a special power," he muttered. "Oh, good spirits that watch over this spring, I have but one wish: that, whatever punishment my present act may bring me, I may often get to handle gold."

As he went away, he seemed to feel himself bolder and stronger than ever before, and as soon as it was full day, he showed himself at the house of the king.

Over all Upsala lay a gloomy silence, because it was the day of Thor. No one was allowed to do any carpentry or weaving. The millstone was not turned on that day and nobody drove a cart. But every house was swept and garnished, for that night it might be that Thor or Fricka even would pay them a visit, in which case the household would hear her sitting and spinning until dawn.

In the king's hall every one looked very solemn, and Adils, tall and dark, sat by the hearth. Though it was summer, a small fire was burning to cleanse and protect the palace against evil spirits. Adils was covered with jewels, and his brown hair lay combed down over his shoulders.

Adils and His Goldsmiths

His wife Yrsa was engaged in clipping his locks with a pair of iron shears of the sort that are still used in the country and are called wool shears. With such implements were kings shorn in those days.

Adils looked sternly at Öjar and pressed his finger to his lips as a sign that the stranger was not to speak loud. To Yrsa he whispered, "I comprehend that this man is Tole Mastersmith, whom I have summoned. Deliver to him the ring Sveagris for him to mend. And give him some of my garments! So great a craftsman may not go about my court in such a wretched shirt. From now on he shall be the foreman of my goldsmiths."

Yrsa opened a chest and took out a golden bracelet together with the poorest of Adils' clothes, for she knew only too well that the king was very stingy. With arms full she went down toward the door. But the hall was long, and when she stood in front of Öjar, she hummed so softly that Adils could not hear:

*"Forge swords for my son,
The high-souled hero,
Who guardeth the guest house.
Warn him to be wary!
Bedspreads raise backs,
From pillars peer eyes."*

Swedish Chieftains

These were dark words, but Yrsa's voice had an earnest and mournful ring. Traveling merchants had often spoken to Öjar about the royal court and Yrsa. Her first husband had fallen in battle against Adils, who had then taken her with him, though not without compulsion had she given her consent. Her son by the first marriage, the great warrior chief Rolf Krake from Lejre in Seeland, had recently arrived with his twelve best men. He was now biding in the guest house until he should get his paternal heritage, which the wealthy Adils did not want to give him.

Öjar therefore took both Sveagris and the clothes in silence and proceeded to the court smithy.

Sometime later a fearful clatter was heard at the door of the royal hall. It was the true Tole, who had haltingly traversed the long road from the swamp. When he laid down the sack with his hammers and other tools, it sounded as if the god Thor himself had driven in over the threshold with his thunder.

Adils motioned to him that he should keep still, but Tole had abode so many good and bad years beside his thundering hammers that he could hardly hear when anyone spoke softly. He swung forward on his crooked leg, and every step seemed a profanation. Meanwhile he stroked his hand

Adils and His Goldsmiths

up and down over his shirt to rub off the soot. He now put a hand up to one ear and yelled as hard as he was able that he could not understand a word.

With that Adils forgot himself and sprang up. "I have just received Tole Mastersmith with such honor as befits a famous craftsman," he said. "But here he brings along a thrall that violates the sacred day of Thor and fancies that he too shall get fine clothes. Silence, not a word! Lead him down into the smithy and chain him to the wall till he learns better court manners. He may there work night and day at the rougher sorts of blacksmithing or whatever he is good for, but never let the fellow come before my eyes again!"

Tole forthwith took up his clanging sack once more and slung it over his shoulders, and the attendants led him down into the smithy. There they secured him to the wall with a heavy link about his foot.

GOLD AND IRON

Öjar, who had become too proud to salute his former master, stood at the anvil with his back turned and tried to mend the ring Sveagris. But as he was not a full-fledged smith, he had to turn over the ring to Tole. "Forge twelve good swords besides!" he ordered curtly, and set about putting on Adils' garments.

Swedish Chieftains

Tole said nothing. He thought, "If I tell the truth and am believed, Adils will take my journeyman's life; and if I'm not believed, he'll take mine." If I understand Adils rightly from the rumors about him, he would have us both killed if he got angry. It is therefore best to keep silence." Accordingly he forged day and night sword after sword.

Before Rolf Krake rode to Upsala, he used to spend his winters quietly at Lejre with his berserks. Nearest the dais sat the gigantic warrior Svipdag, who alone was as good as twelve other berserks. He had formerly been a retainer of Adils, but had wearied of serving such a miserly lord.

Soon after there came, too, the no less famous Bodvar Bjarke from Norway. When Bodvar strode into the hall at Lejre, a weak and slender youth was lying crouched behind a heap of bones in a corner, at whom the warriors by the table would throw the stripped bones of the feast. Bodvar took the youth with him, though he trembled in every limb, and set him behind his bench. When the flying bones began to whistle again, Bodvar seized a great hip-bone, which had nearly struck him, and hurled it with such force at him who had thrown it that the man fell dead. He then gave clothes to his favorite, made him drink

Adils and His Goldsmiths

the blood of a slain wild beast, and called him Hjalte. After that day Hjalte became as strong and valiant as the others.

With such warriors it was that Rolf Krake journeyed to Upsala. They followed him gladly, for he was companionable, generous, fair-minded, and as merciful to the weak as he was terrible to his foes. They knew that Adils was cunning and treacherous, but Yrsa helped them safely over pitfalls and other forms of ambush in the king's hall, and now they were gathered in the guest house. This consisted of a long hall, in which the tops of the posts were ornamented with colored faces of women, while behind them on the sleeping benches lay piles of skins. The men poured ice-cold water over one another or held their naked arms over the fire to harden themselves. In the end they took their weapons and smote boldly and gaily at each other, but without giving any wounds, for every blow met a counterblow.

Öjar now came to the door dragging the twelve swords that Tole had forged. He had planned to say something like, "I am Tole Mastersmith. Behold what I have wrought for you, King Rolf! Reward me generously!"

Instead, however, he let fall the swords on the threshold and could not get a word across his tongue. He had never previously stood before a

Swedish Chieftains

hero, and directly the air grew, as it seemed, higher and purer. Rolf appeared to him so strong and yet so frank and good that every untruth had to be silent before such a man. His mere presence exercised so strange an influence that Öjar for the first time felt his own insignificance and paltriness.

Suddenly he recalled Yrsa's words of warning and burst out with:

*"Hero,
Bedspreads raise backs,
From pillars peer eyes."*

"I see by your look that that is the only true thing you have said for long," responded Rolf, as he distributed the swords among his warriors. "Your war-edges have been blunted with our play, and had I not my own good sword Skavnung, I should be glad to choose among such weapons."

With that he went along the sleeping-benches and struck lustily on the skin coverlets with the flat of his sword. They then began to raise their backs, and out crept a number of Adils' men who had lain in ambush underneath. He drove out the whole flock amid merry jibes. Afterwards he rapped on the pillars, which gave forth a hollow sound. He then directed his sword-point at the eyes cut in the women's faces. They at

Adils and His Goldsmiths

once blinked, and there remained only two dark empty holes in their place. It was Adils' spies, who had hid themselves in the pillars with their weapons; and a scraping noise as of fat moles came from under the ground when they crept away through subterranean passages.

But hardly was there quiet underground before sparks began flying in through the apertures in the roof as thickly as flakes in a snow-storm. Adils' people, it appeared, had barred the doors from without, piled up wood on all sides of the house and set it ablaze. The warriors were already nearly suffocated with smoke, and something had to be decided upon at once. At Bodvar's suggestion they placed themselves in a corner of the hall, forced out the planks with their backs and made their way through the flames with a long jump.

Their first move was to the stable where they had put their horses. Adils, however, had had their tails cut off and had decorated them in a shameful fashion. The warriors therefore took Adils' finest horses, Hurtler and Crow, which he prized greatly, with several other good chargers, and flung themselves into the battle in the streets, which fairly swarmed with armed men.

Yrsa meanwhile hastened to the smithy with a great silver horn, which she had filled with Adils'

Swedish Chieftains

treasure. There was still a little room left below the rim. She felt among the gold work that hung on the wall and laid on the very top of the horn the bracelet Sveagris.

"I read honesty in your eyes," she said to Tole amid pantings and sobs. "Here is the paternal heritage that I think should be rightly apportioned to my son. This you are to deliver to him as he rushes by."

Yrsa had hardly time to wind her veil about her and hasten back to the palace before the tumult of the fight approached. Tole went as close to the door as his chain would allow and held out the horn. "A krake is what we call a thin pollarded tree-trunk, and it's like such that you look, you who ride foremost," he shouted to Rolf Krake. As he gave him the horn, he told him from whom it was. Rolf took the horn without any sign of pleasure, muttering that it would have been better had the smith lifted his mother up to him in the saddle.

When Rolf had got some distance away on the plain, he saw a cloud of dust enveloping the hills outside Upsala. Spears and helmets glimmered from it, and Adils, the dusky friend of the gods, appeared, spurring forward among his knights on one of the wildest chargers.

"I will sow seed on Fyrisvall that the Svear

Adils and His Goldsmiths

will be swift to reap," cried Rolf scornfully, as he strewed the gold from the horn along the road. The Svear leaped from their horses to gather it, although Adils, red with fury, shouted to them to ride on. He was now the foremost, but when he was so near that his horse bit the flank of Rolf's charger, the viking threw the ring Sveagris to the earth. Adils could not then withstand the temptation to bend down and get it on his spear-shaft. "The woman has been more gracious to Rolf than to me," he sighed.

"Now I've bent the back of the richest among the Svear," exclaimed Rolf, and gave him an insulting blow at the base of the back. He then picked up Sveagris himself and got away unhurt with his men.

Adils could not sit in his saddle. He had to be lifted down and stand leaning over the grass while his wound was bound. Beside him sat Öjar with the gold he had gathered knotted into a corner of his cloak. He tried to drink from a ditch, but his throat grew so compressed that he could not swallow, though he was parching with thirst.

He started with a moan of contrition and walked back with lagging and uncertain steps to the court smithy. He stopped before the anvil and softly laid a hand on one of Tole's with the

Swedish Chieftains

salutation, "My beloved old master, best of all the craft of smiths, how could I have been so ungrateful to you, who were always as a father to us apprentices? I have here so much gold that it is heavy to carry, yet am I the unhappiest man that ever spoke with you. Take the gold as reparation for all you have had to suffer on my account!"

But Tole shook his head indifferently and tried to continue his work. Then Öjar knelt, broke apart his chains and remorsefully kissed his sooty feet.

Without a word Tole threw his clattering tool-bag over his shoulders and hobbled off. When Öjar saw him turn in among the firs on the path that led to the huts in the wood, he went to the sacred spring, tore apart the fold of his mantle and with trembling hands threw all the gold into the water.

Towards evening he entered the royal hall. Adils lay face downward on his bed, and the mead horns stood untouched on the table. All were taciturn, and Yrsa sat with the other women behind the curtain in the farthest part of the hall, for she wished neither to see nor speak with the king.

Öjar placed himself at the foot of the bed. "You have been more generous to me, Adils, than

Adils and His Goldsmiths

I deserved, for I was a thief both of fortune and of gold, while the true Tole Mastersmith was chained to the wall like a prisoner. To win success I washed in the sacred spring itself and troubled its bright mirror. When did you ever hear of such a shameful profanation? The hardest death, if you so decide, would not be punishment enough, and I have already suffered terribly from the unquenchable thirst which has consumed me since that hour."

One of the courtiers rose. "If I may speak," he began, "my counsel is to spare your minion, Adils. He has not sinned worse than we. Here you lie with your shame-wound, groaning as we do, and mortification drips down over us like black pitch. Greedily have we gathered and hoarded our gold; and now thirst, the hottest of thirsts that can burn in man, is choking us, the thirst for heroes' fame."

Adils was silent, and no one lifted a finger against the sacrilegious Öjar. The door was kept shut and the harps hung forgotten on their pillars. So passed day after day, evening after evening, year after year. Smoke rose as before from King Adils' house, but no mirth was ever heard from it, and he himself came seldom out to his people.

One winter when many people had gathered for the sacred rites, the most impatient of them

Swedish Chieftains

led forward a horse. They cried that the king should show he could now sit in the saddle again.

Oppressed by dark forebodings, he accoutred himself and mounted, but he let the reins hang and showed that he had aged greatly. Though his eyes were nearly blinded, being covered with films that only admitted a gray light, he saw much that was invisible to the others. He saw that the good spirit who faithfully attends every man from the cradle to the judgment place in the underworld was now walking beside his horse, but with hands before his averted face as if weeping. The king knew what that foretold.

The winter night was bitter and Charles' Wain was sparkling. Adils sat crouched together, swaying a little to the motion of the horse. He rode a turn in the circle of stones where the sacrifice was to be held, but the horse stumbled, and the king fell off, striking his head against the nearest stone so that his brains ran out. There lay the mightiest and richest of the Skilvings stretched on the frozen ground. The Svear ran forward with their torches, gave one another their hands across his blood, and vowed that thenceforth more than the gold of their arm-rings they would prize the iron in plough and sword.

That vow they kept, for much has happened

Adils and His Goldsmiths

since in the Northland, and this book is far from finished.

NOTE

The rulers of the Svear were a great family called the Skilvings or Ynglings, reputed to have descended from the god, Yngve-Frej. It was he, the saga said, who had built the renowned fane at Old Upsala, and his descendants were so highly venerated that the head of the family conducted sacrifices to the gods, not only for the people under his own roof, but for the whole people. The sagas have much to tell of the Yngling kings, many of whom were great warriors, but most of the tales are romances. The first king of whom we have any positive knowledge is Ottar Vendelkråke. His son was Adils.

Ansgar, the Apostle to the North

IN LAKE MÄLAR lies an island known as Birch Island. In it there is a ravine which is called "the black earth," because the soil is mixed with charcoal from former fire-places. Here too have been dug up a multitude of broken plates, jugs and glass, as well as jewels and coins from as far as Arabia. There have even been found bits of earth with the clear finger imprint of the thralls who stood there a thousand years ago and plastered the walls of their masters' cabins. In some conflagration these bits of earth have chanced to be burnt and thus preserved. The ashes of heathens, small Christian crosses, and rusty nails from coffins have been taken from the old graves of the island and along the shore are still visible at low tide the oaken piles which supported the landing bridges.

At this point lay the rich merchant town of Birka.

On a certain summer evening long ago many folk were assembled there. Those who could get no lodging in the town lived outside in huts of leaves. In the open spaces the young folk were playing noisy games, after which amid jest and song they went up to the mountain. On it stood a round citadel of rough boulders, whence there

Ansgar, the Apostle

was a wide, unimpeded outlook. A pleasing coolness freshened the air. The houses, which were of wood or occasionally of woven rushes and earth, were mirrored between alders and birches in the quiet water.

The liveliest turmoil was down by the landings, for many foreign ships had just put in, and the woolen fabrics of Friesland were in great demand. The strangers who clambered ashore had much to carry, but two of them were empty-handed. These were a darkish Benedictine monk of eight-and-twenty from the cloister of Corbie in Picardy and his friend the monk Vitmar. The leader's name was Ansgar, and he at once caught the first man he met about the neck and kissed him on both cheeks.

"We have been plundered by the vikings," he said with a fresh and familiar gaiety. "They took everything from us, even to the books and presents which we fetched from the emperor for your young king. Now we have nothing with which to pay for our lodging. I wonder who would care to house two such destitute voyagers."

The man to whom he spoke so frankly and without concealment was rough in appearance. As it happened, he was the chieftain of the town and his name was Herger. He was a weathered and grizzled viking, who only in his old age had

Swedish Chieftains

settled down to rest at home, and he was mistrustful of the two preachers. He knew who they were and that they had been sent by the emperor at the invitation of the king to speak to the people, but he only replied curtly, "King Björn is out hunting."

From all sides hospitable hands were extended, and an old widow named Frideborg took hold of the cord around Ansgar's waist. "It would be an infringement of my rights," she said, "if I might not receive you as my guests, since mine is the nearest house. To be sure it has a low roof."

Ansgar and Vitmar gratefully entered her house. As soon as they had washed and put on their scanty garments, they went to rest.

Next morning Herger came down to the hut, for he wished to test them. He found them sitting on the ground making nets. Ansgar was very lean from fasting and penance. He recited from memory several passages out of the psalms of David, which were his favorite texts when he had his books.

"Since King Björn is away," began Herger with assumed friendliness, "I in his stead have had a stately banquet prepared for you. You must surely be quite famished after your long trip, and nothing shall be lacking, neither harp-playing nor delicate dishes."

Ansgar, the Apostle

"We get our daily bread with our own hands," replied Ansgar humbly and quietly. "It is therefore we are making nets, so that we can fish and get what is needful both for ourselves and our kindly hostess. At your banquet we should be ill at ease."

When Herger returned home to the citadel, he said to his servants, "Here is a great jar of wine. Take it down to Ansgar and then look through the chink of the door to see if he can resist fortifying himself with a merry glass."

Ansgar accepted the jar from the servants and thanked them, but then fastened it up and set it in a corner. "Here we have wine for the Communion of the dying," he said. "Guard it well, Mother Frideborg. If we might but get our church as soon!"

In Birka were many prisoners from Christian lands, who had been made thralls. When they came to learn of the monks' arrival, they gathered about the house with tears of gladness, overjoyed that they might once again hear Christian teachers. Many of the Birka people came along too out of curiosity, crying, "Ansgar, when will you talk to us of the new gods?"

"That would I do every hour of the day," he answered, advancing toward the sunlight at the door. "Glad am I at heart that ye Swedes are

Swedish Chieftains

such a splendid people, whom from the first hour I have come to love. The journey was hard through the dismal woods and over lakes as big as oceans. But what a land it is that ye have to dwell in! Rich is it in corn and honey and fuel and rivers and inlets of the sea, and the homes are full of strong and happy children. And better ships have I seldom seen builded. Often too outside the villages I saw men reverently bringing earth from various parishes to raise a funeral mound above some great chieftain. But when I learned that he had been a sea king who had ravaged peaceful coasts, I recalled why I was on my pilgrimage. Christ is stronger even than Thor."

A muffled murmur was the threatening response. King Björn, who had just returned from his hunting, was also among the people. In war the Swedes obeyed him with blind enthusiasm, but in time of peace they talked over questions of law and right with him at the Thing, and now they saluted him with a hearty handshake.

Herger whispered to him, "This Ansgar whom you summoned to us is a wonderful man, indomitable, almost like a warrior. He has given me much to think on. Many times have I tested him and now I will do it again for the last time." He thereupon turned to Ansgar with the words, "It is well and good that you have many fair words.

Ansgar, the Apostle

But if your God is as mighty as you say, we await that you show it by a miracle."

Ansgar replied, "If I were worthy to pray for a miracle of my Master, it would be that he would make me and all here good men. Then we should soon have strength to build the first church."

"As far as concerns you, Ansgar, he has already performed the miracle," answered Herger, and started away together with the king. However, he halted with his hands under his breast and exclaimed laughing, "But if you want to build a church, you must surely call for the help of the giants that a god-house may be raised."

Ansgar was troubled, and in the evening when he lay in bed unable to sleep, he seemed to hear a voice. It sounded soft and plaintive like a little child's, and at the same time it seemed to him that it was his own heart whispering. "Ansgar," said the voice, "the chieftain spoke truly."

Frightened, he rose up early and rowed out to his nets. "Beware of the other shore!" Fridborg called to him. "There in the ravine many giants still have their dwelling."

This reminded him yet again of the words of the voice. Up yonder towered cliff upon cliff, and when he raised his head, he thought he could almost see the giants sitting aloft, shaggy of hide,

Swedish Chieftains

their fingers clutched about the ledges and their hair blowing across their foreheads.

The first breeze of dawn soughed through the tops of the firs, and Ansgar clasped his hands over his eyes. He sat thus a while sunken in thought and perplexity. Gradually his soul was illuminated by an inner light, which suddenly gave a quite different meaning to the words of the voice.

He turned his skiff toward Birka, and when he came up among the hazel bushes and trees, he fashioned a high cross. This he took with him and went out on the meadow where the people had just assembled to hold the Thing.

Never before in his whole life had it been vouchsafed to Ansgar to use his gift of words as he did on that day. At the end there was no one in all Birka who did not come to hear him. Sick and old folk who could scarcely shuffle their feet, thralls, merchants, and small children all directed their steps to the Thing meadow. Some sat in the grass, others still carried their spades or tools over their shoulders, and great crowds attired themselves in white raiment and were baptized on the shore. Finally King Björn advanced to question the gods whether they permitted Ansgar to build a house to the new god. Ansgar stood beside him, glad and confident. The king cut

Ansgar, the Apostle

several slivers of wood and carved them with runes. When he threw them on the ground, they fell so that the answer was one of assent.

The hours meanwhile had flown, and once more the evening drew near. Tranquil golden clouds stood above the bay, the woods grew stiller, and the tops of the pines already reached above the lower edge of the sun.

With furrowed brow and flashing, far-gazing eyes Ansgar held out the cross before him, and the enraptured multitude followed him on both sides. When he had gone several paces to where the ground rose, he thrust in the cross so that it stood upright.

His voice, so strong before, now trembled. "At last the hour has come," he said almost in a whisper. "Here the church threshold shall be, and where the shadow points the altar shall stand. Every year on the same saint's day as to-day, when the same blessed fragrance breathes from woods and fields, the last sunbeam shall go the same way as the shadow and shine in through the door against the gold on the altar."

"Have you yourself the gold that is needed to raise such a house, you who live on bread and water?" inquired Herger.

Ansgar replied, "If my god is the strongest, I know then too that the giants who shall build

Swedish Chieftains

his church as a hall over the whole earth must be so strong in will and faith that they shall bargain for neither goods nor hire. And you yourself are chosen to become one of the giants, Herger. This is the miracle you asked for. The white garments await you, and to-morrow I shall baptize you."

The crowd turned to see whither the shadow pointed. It then appeared that the tip extended just to the space in front of Herger's own house.

Herger stood silent, and it would have been hard to divine his thoughts. He fought a stern fight, but in the midst of it his harsh features lightened and grew kinder and more peaceful than before. Finally he went into his house and fetched his seaman's axe. "Take your axes and follow me over the lake to the wood. The night is bright, and we will seek out the best timber for our first church."

If giants had swung the axes, they could not have felled and stripped mightier trees than those which in the following days were dragged across the water by the skiffs. The next evening Herger and Frideborg were baptized.

Amid great joy the church was finally completed and consecrated. Ansgar then bade farewell to his new congregation in the distant north and with his friend Vitmar began the long return trip. Many Birka folk went with them to friends

Ansgar, the Apostle

and acquaintances, and everywhere they were hospitably received.

But back at Birka Frideborg opened her sacks and chests to give her all to the poor. There were, however, no poor in rich Birka, and she decided that it should be taken to others who had more need of her little gifts. Yet there was something that Frideborg kept and guarded as the most precious of treasures. This was the remains of the sacred wine which was still left in the jar. She poured it into a little flask and hid it well. "Pour that wine into my mouth when my last hour comes," she enjoined her daughter, "if there is no priest then in the city."

Years of unrest came after King Björn's death, and defiant chieftains raised idols once more in Birka. Every morning the images were given a plate of meat and four loaves of bread to eat. The Christians, who were ridiculed, lived quietly to themselves, and Frideborg sat in her hut and grew old. Ansgar then sent a hermit named Andgar, who came just in time to pour the last drops of the holy wine between her dying lips.

Ansgar too came yet once more to visit his beloved congregation at Birka. Though young, he was by now a bishop and a widely celebrated man. His grave he later found in Bremen.

Finally Birka was ravaged and leveled to the

Swedish Chieftains

ground, and the Christians gathered at Sigtuna. There they built many churches, but the savage Esthonians pressed up the Mälar in their ships and devastated Sigtuna as well. It is related that they carried off all the treasure, among other things the two choir doors from the church of Our Lady, which can still be seen at Novgorod. To block the Mälar the Swedes then began to fortify with walls and towers the island where Stockholm afterwards grew.

On the hill by the former city of Birka there now stands a stone cross to the memory of Ansgar, the apostle to the North. As the cross daily sends its shadow to all quarters according to the revolution of the sun, so in time were Christian altars built all over the land, in south and west and east and north.

NOTE

Ansgar, known as the Apostle of the North, was a native of Northern France. King Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, seeing that he could not defend his realm from the vikings, thought it might be possible instead to soften their savagery by converting them to Christianity. To this end he sent Ansgar to preach the word of God to the Scandinavians. Ansgar worked first among the Danes and came to Sweden in 830. He did not remain there, but went to Germany, where he died in 865. As long as he lived he worked for the conversion of the North by educating Scandinavian young men and sending them back to preach the gospel in their homeland.

St. Erik and the Abducted Maiden

IT WAS the night before Ascension Day, Holy Thursday, and the dwarfs had opened the doors of the mountains. Troll-wise fishermen swung their skiffs through the reeds in the direction the sun turns and sat with a rod in either fist. And crooked wizards searched about on the ground, where on this night they might pick up gold and silver with their bare hands.

Unheeding their conjurations, Erik the Devout rode along the path with his warriors, who were singing psalms. On his bright curled locks was a blue cap surmounted by a golden diadem with flat jewels, and a blue mantle hung down over his sword. Before him was carried a banner with a cross, under which he had been fighting in Finland and which he now wished to hang up in his church on the hills of Upsala.

It was dusk in the woods, and he noted that a little dwarf with a pointed red hood was going along beside him leading his horse. But the pious king merely shut his eyes so as not to be disturbed at his prayers and silently shifted the beads on his rosary. Only with the last bead did he look up.

The dwarf emitted an evil laugh, for he had led the king into the mountain and was trying to shut the rocky door behind him. But Erik

Swedish Chieftains

made the sign of the cross. It was then impossible to close the door. Cold drops fell from the cavern ceiling, and a troop of small villainous-looking smiths were hammering and clamoring about a green fire. In the farthest corner of the cave lay something which at first appeared to be a pile of dust and blackened wood. But with that it stirred, and a young girl raised herself and lifted her veil. She had a round dusky face, a stone axe in her belt, and was clad in shaggy furs.

"Stranger," she whispered somnolently as in a dream. "You made just now the sign of the hammer as Ura-Kaipa, the great chieftain, used to do when he prayed to the Stone Gods. Lives Ura-Kaipa still? Has he grown old? I was one of his thrall women. Ah! now it grows clear in my memory. In the dark of night during a snow-storm I was led away into the mountains."

"Many thousand years may have passed since then," answered Erik, "for I never remember to have seen such a human being as you."

"To me it has been as a single night," she continued more rapidly. "But neither have I ever seen such a snorting monster as you are on. Get off and sit here on my down cushions!" It was a wretched bed of moss and earth, but the trolls had bewitched her sight so that everything looked unlike itself to her. "What a fine dwelling-place!

St. Erik and the Abducted Maiden

Take a torch and light yourself about!" she bade, staring at the mouldering walls of the cavern. The light she gave him was but a bit of stone. "Little brownies, lay the festal board. Ura-Kaipa's thrall desires to have speech with the unknown one and to hear news of mankind." They brought lizards, toads, and decayed wood, taking a nibble themselves in the process. But they were light eaters and were satisfied with a single bite.

"Poor captive!" said Erik. "Races have died out, and here you have slept on in this cave. Come and see for yourself how things are going on the earth!" He lifted her before him in the saddle and rode out of the mountain hall. The dwarfs followed inquisitively in a long row, making the oddest leaps and stopping only at the edge of the woods. They had gradually come to be her friends, and she was glad to perceive their hoods among the juniper bushes.

But now her eyes began to grow wide. Out on the plain by the mouth of the river the town of East Aros lay in the dawn light. It is there that modern Upsala now stands. No tents or wattle huts were there as in the encampments of Ura-Kaipa, but entire trunks were laid one upon another to make a house. Most remarkable of all, however, was the reddish mountain in the

Swedish Chieftains

middle. "That is the Church of the Holy Trinity," explained Erik. "Men can now build with stones so that they hang high in the air without falling. But then every little stone must be laid with careful measurement."

Only now and then did she understand any words of his speech, for the language, too, had changed. She nestled nearer to him, and his hair shirt prickled her through his outer clothing, but she felt that he had already become as a kind of father to her. She asked in alarm what that was which boomed and sang.

"Those are the bells, which cleanse the air of trolls and witchcraft."

She turned and could not keep from laughing when she saw the terrified dwarfs run back into the woods at the sound of the bells. Some tumbled forward, some on their backs. They hardly knew how to get away fast enough. With that the sun rose.

"Oh, there is the sun!" she exulted, with throbbing heart. "Oh thou radiant as ever, art thou still living?"

"Yes, that is the sun," he nodded as he lifted her out of the saddle. "We will stop here for mass," he added to his men, who were already awaiting him at the church door. There he tarried a while and administered justice to both poor

St. Erik and the Abducted Maiden

and rich who had gathered about him. He did this with such mild benevolence that the disputants became gradually appeased. After that all entered the church except the girl, who remained standing before the threshold, looking up mistrustfully at the roof.

"However much Ura-Kaipa offered to the Stone Gods, he could never get them to hang in the air," she thought. "He is a marvellous man, this new chieftain. He did not tremble before the dwarfs, and now he stands just as calmly under the hanging stones."

Innumerable candles burned in the church, and pungent incense was streaming up. As she stood there thinking how all things had changed, all but the sun and the forest, she caught sight of a glittering war-host approaching. She then forgot her fear and ran in among the warriors under the dome to warn the kneeling king.

"I forebode that these are my enemies of Denmark and that they covet my crown and my life," he answered softly, without rising. "Sit down by the threshold, girl, and be patient. I must hear out this beautiful mass. We men have gradually won much that is dearer to us than life."

When the mass had been sung he went out. The fight was fierce but short. Erik, the Devout,

Swedish Chieftains

overmatched, was thrown to earth. One of his foes raised a broadsword above his neck.

"Now I shall see if he is not afraid," sobbed the girl, as she stared wonderingly in the midst of her terror.

The king's face, which had before been pale, was suffused with bright red as if of the deepest joy. "More than the earth and sun, which has just arisen," he whispered, kissing the cross of his rosary, "I love something far off, which I have never yet seen with my eyes or touched with my hands. For the love of that it is a glory and a heavenly bliss to die."

The sword fell, and where his head rolled to the ground a bright fountain sprang up. Monks and other pious men raised up the body, and the blind who touched it received again their sight. His banner with the cross was thenceforward preserved as Sweden's holiest standard, and the day of his death in May, when the wheat is in the ear and the juniper blossoms, was celebrated in even the smallest church. His bones were carried about the fields to bring a good harvest, as formerly was done with the image of Freyr, and to-day they lie in a silver casket in Upsala Cathedral.

But on the evening of the day when he fell there was a knocking at the gate of the mountain. "Open, dwarfs!" commanded a trembling voice.

St. Erik and the Abducted Maiden

"Everything outside is new and strange for the thrall woman of Ura-Kaipa. We go better together, ye and I. Dwarfs, dwarfs, things have come to such a pass that men let themselves be killed for something far off, which they can neither see nor touch with their hands. Where will it end? With you I will sit again in the mountain and dream."

Roots and bushes wound themselves over the gate of the mountain, and hundreds of years have since gone by like fleeting winter days. Awake! thrall woman of Ura-Kaipa; come out once again, behold and wonder. It will soon be time.

NOTE

St. Erik was honored throughout the Catholic period as the patron saint of the Swedes. His name was Erik Jedvardsson, and he was chosen king by the Svear in 1150. As king he led a Crusade to Finland and forced the Finns to be baptized. After his return he was attacked by the Danish prince, Magnus Henriksen, and killed at Upsala in 1160.

Birger Jarl

INGRID ULVA of Bjälbo had sent her folk to gather nuts. The way was long, and the dark began to settle down.

This gray-haired woman of the race of the Folkungs meanwhile went about and closed the larder-house herself. Within hung long rows of smoked and salted carcasses, nor was there lack of herbs, honey, or sacks of ground meal. She saw to it that there were ash twigs in the butter jars as a protection against witchcraft and that in the milk strainers were pebbles gathered where lightning had struck. As it grew darker there sounded under the floor a soft tapping, as if some one was playing on the planks with his fingers. That was the brownies dancing. Their candles glimmered between the boards like faint moonlight. They threw a little sawdust up at her sometimes, in which case she did not laugh as do the foolish, but bowed deeply and gathered it up as a precious gift. She then stored it away to strew on the ploughed land, where in summer there was such rustling of wheat that it was like waves of the sea. Thus Bjälbo became fertile and rich.

When war broke out, Dame Ingrid shifted her place to the church tower with her maid-

Birger Jarl

servants and her frying-pans, but to-night she had nothing to fear. A poor old man of the Folkungs, who was given a home on the estate out of charity, silently and sullenly helped her to carry the keys. His name was Sune, and he was the only member of the household who had stayed at home. Ill-clad and indifferent, he followed at her heels. When she had locked up the heavier keys in the cupboard with a smaller silver key which hung with the bunch at her waist, she turned about with the words, "Sune, I and my sons are the richest folk in Sweden."

"That's why you like to invite guests to the house and show off," he jested bitterly, looking toward the door. "It's your principal joy."

A man came limping in, propped on a crutch. A sunken breast, flat shoulders, and bright gold hair which fell in curls over the austere black attire—that was all which was visible in the gloaming. He placed himself by the extinguished hearth and stared through the smoke holes in the ceiling.

The proud Ingrid Ulva took a step backwards and twitched Sune by the sleeve. "It's the king; it's lame, lisping Erik," she said in an undertone. "How has he come here? And whatever shall I do? Here I stand in my very worst clothes, almost like a thrall, in mere homespun."

Swedish Chieftains

"Come, thirvanth, a light here, if it pleathe you!" lisped the king, and his voice rang with such hearty kindness that it might have melted the iciest pride into drops of warm blood. But Ingrid Ulva was clever. "Whoever you are, way-farer," she said with a sudden decision, "sit down. I'll go and fetch my mistress, the high-born Ingrid Ulva."

With short steps she hastened up to the chests in the attic. But when she fingered under her belt, the bunch of keys was gone. There she was, without keys, without servants, her chests and larder locked—she Dame Ingrid Ulva! And in the midst of opulent Bjälbo! In the chests lay kirtles of cloth of gold and wine jugs and goblets that would have honored a bishop's board.

"Such a humiliation I can never survive," she thought, listening to every slightest sound. "Have the servants wholly forgotten me out there in the woods? If they were only here, they'd cut open the doors and locks with axes. And you, little brownies! Is that how you repay your mistress? Do you hide away her bunch of keys just when she needs it most?"

Hot with excitement, she went down into the bake-house, but there stood only a little white porridge and a wooden pan with milk. She stirred the ashes with a pine stick till it took fire and

Birger Jarl

blazed up, but no matter how she illuminated the floor and stone stairway, she did not find the keys. "There's nothing else for it," she whispered to herself, "than to keep on as I began and pretend I'm a stupid thrall. I can't let him go on waiting in the dark."

She took the burning stick in her mouth as a thrall would do and brought in the porridge and milk to the table. There she lighted a poor solitary tallow candle. It was now apparent that the room was a splendid hall with hangings and weapons and banners. That was, however, but a poor reception for a guest in far-famed Bjälbo. "Our mighty Dame Ingrid," she said, taking back the stick between her lips, "is out on a pleasure trip with all the servants. You'll have to wait, my good man, and have patience."

Erik the Lisper smiled over his entire face and nodded at her with his bright friendly eyes. He had never before met her, but he noted the broad gold ring which she had forgot to take from her thumb. He therefore knew who she was. He did not wish to embarrass her by confessing his discovery, but for the sake of appearances took several spoonfuls of porridge. He then got up and took his crutch. A lovable gentleness appeared in his features, and it was evident that such a lord could never wield a spear

Swedish Chieftains

or a sword. With a few bashful words he proffered thanks and bade farewell, limping out of the door afterwards as silently as he had come.

Sune sat down at the foot of the table muttering some words of malicious satisfaction, but hardly had Ingrid Ulva taken a couple of steps when she stood still with a cry. Her foot had struck against something bright that projected between the planks of the floor. When she stooped she made out at once that it was the chain of her bunch of keys. "It is you, brownies, who have brought me this disgrace, though I've always been good to you," she stammered, catching up the keys. She hastened to the chests, clad herself in silks, and fastened a small pearl crown on her hair.

"Quick! a fire in the bake-house," she cried to the servants, who were now heard on the sward outside. "To horse, overseer, and ride your best after King Erik. Greet him and say that now Ingrid Ulva has come home and awaits him in the high seat!"

The smoke soon billowed up from the bake-house. Jars and casks were pulled out and torches set in the sconces along the sides of the hall. It was a different thing now from the smoky pine stick she had carried about and chewed at a while ago.

Birger Jarl

When all was ready, the door was thrown back with a merry clamor as if a whole band of warriors had rushed into the hall. But this time again it was but a single man, Dame Ingrid's son Birger. His keen brown eyes were twinkling mischievously. He spread out his arms toward his mother in her festal array, as she sat throned among the steel swords that hung on the pillars by the high seat.

"Hail, mother of jarls!" he cried triumphantly.

"My sons, alas! are no jarls," she objected sternly.

"Hail, mother of kings!"

"The real king has just been here, the scion of the holy Erik. He came on crutches. Every race has its day, and then the branches wither."

"You know that I am the king's best friend. We were on the way to Alvastra. Then he halted his escort beyond the hill and went on alone to surprise you, mother. So much ill is said of us Folkungs and all our extravagance. What did he see?"

"A thrall woman in homespun."

"A timid, beggarly-clad lady he saw, the sickly but modest and worthy King Erik. He recognized you by your ring."

Birger stopped to utter a long laugh. Then his look softened and filled with dark fire. "And

Swedish Chieftains

then," he continued, "then Erik thought: 'All the evil that is whispered about the Folkungs is mere gabble. My old jarl Ulv Fase is a nuisance. When he lies down to his last rest—may it be soon!—that woman's son shall be my jarl. To him then I'll give my own sister, seeing that I myself have no son to inherit the crown.' It was with such thoughts that King Erik went on his way this evening. Do you understand me now, Ingrid Ulva! Hail to you, mother of the Folkungs!"

He playfully drew off her ring and dropped it through a chink in the floor. "There's a thank-offering to your brownies for hiding your keys this evening!"

Sune, who had listened in silence, let his hands fall heavily on the table. "Kinsman," he said sullenly, "it's with a trick that you begin."

Birger looked at him sternly. "Look out for the next trick, you kinsman of the Folkungs, if you cross me!"

"And if we follow you?"

"Then you, poor as you are, shall alone have all the gold and silver that the god Jumala away off in the Eastland wears on his bosom."

"What will you do, if you get to be jarl?"

"Baptize the heathen on the other side of the Baltic who burned Sigtuna, and make men of

Birger Jarl

them. Burst open the iron mountains and plough the fields. Set towers upon Stockholm and lawful peace over your women and churches and homes. Tell me only how the short years of my life shall suffice to do it!"

"Now I hear you speak as the man we have been longing for all these hundred of years," exclaimed Sune, and hunted out his armor from the corner where it had long been hanging unused. When Birger finally rode out again, he followed along.

Time passed, and many springs came to break up the ice. Ulv Fase departed, and Birger was made jarl. Soon he was the man who had chief say in the land, and those who opposed him had to bow before his power and tremble before his anger. At the ringing of the bells congregations gathered in the churchyards, where monkish enthusiasts arose, crucifix in hand, to preach the crusade. They told of the chivalric bands who fought and bled to redeem the Holy Sepulchre from the violent hands of the unbelievers. They urged the Swedes likewise for their souls' sake to go to battle against the heathens by the Baltic. Men thronged forward then with shouts of pious jubilation. At the preacher's feet lay a hollowed log bound with iron and fastened with a padlock. It was called the log of offerings. Into it poor

Swedish Chieftains

and rich threw their contributions for the campaign, glad that the glory of God should be increased. Many, too, set their gifts on the very altar. "God wills it, God wills it!" murmured the knights, upon whose mantles the blood-red cross was fastened in the midst of prayer. They were clad entirely in chain mail, which extended up to the chin. Their steel caps had a plate in front which ran down between the eyes. To distinguish one from another they had various emblems on their shields. Thus the sun would gleam on effigies of birds, stags, fish, and flowers. Birger Jarl's sky blue shield of the Folkungs bore a golden lion, and his long sword was so heavy that his squire grew hot when he had to fasten it in his master's belt. Sloops and schooners put to sea, and with a flutter of sacred banners the fleet sailed away for Finland, which was then called Eastland.

When Birger Jarl had landed, he raised a cross on the shore and promised mercy to all who would be baptized. Howls answered him from the distant steeps, and bewitched arrows began to whizz. The heathen of the wilderness were mad with hunger, because the Christian priests on the coast had refused to let them come down to the harbors to buy meat and salt. In revenge they tied captured Christians by the hair to bent birch

Birger Jarl

saplings, which then swung in the wind, lifting the victims up and down from the ground.

"It's windy to-day," the heathens cried mockingly to the crusaders from their ambush behind the junipers. "Come into our woods and see how the dead Christ-men hop and dance under the birches!" The crusaders drew their swords and marched forward singing between thicket and crag. Birger Jarl drove away the emaciated wizards who guarded the gate of an enclosure.

"Turn back, ill-fated stranger!" they whispered, not daring to speak aloud. "This is a sacred garden; this is Jumala's grove." But the jarl entered with his best warriors. The grass grew high amid flowers, though darkened by the shade of hornbeams, ash trees, wild cherries, and ancient oaks. The delicious song of warbling birds made the men light-headed, so that they reeled about, laughing or weeping, unable to say whether they felt happy or melancholy. Under the thickest oak stood a high block of stone bestrewn with gold and silver, above which lay a small stone to serve as head. This was Jumala.

"Jarl," stammered a choked voice, and Sune tottered in between the trees, "I have run myself hot to reach you. A ship has just arrived from Sweden. Erik the Lisper is dead."

"Then I will keep my vow to you," responded

Swedish Chieftains

the jarl, and with his hand he swept down all the gold and silver into Sune's waiting helmet. "Jùmala, Jumala, bow your stone head, for it is the new king of Sweden that speaks to you!"

He noted, however, that the magicians tiptoed forward and pressed an ear to the block with an evil laugh. "What are you listening for?" he asked. "For Jumala's answer," they whispered. "He says, 'Never shall you wear a king's crown, Birger Jarl.' That is Jumala's revenge because you have desecrated his grove."

The jarl shrugged his shoulders and went out. Below in the water of the river the priest dipped emaciated men, women, and children, while the crusaders stood constantly by on both banks with drawn sword. Birger commanded several of the knights to remain in the conquered land as chieftains, after which he hastened to his ship.

When he came back to the Swedish lords, they said, "We have taken Valdemar, your oldest son, as king, since his mother was of the race of St. Erik." The enraged jarl asked how they had presumed to choose a child in his absence. With that advanced a powerful noble called Joar the Blue, who replied, "If you are not content, I can shake out another king from the cloak I wear." The jarl was then silent.

Sune and other discontented Folkungs and

Birger Jarl

nobles took arms in insurrection, but they were beaten at Herrevadsbro, and the leaders had to bend their heads under the sword.

Valdemar mostly drowsed in the ladies' bower and played with his handsome curls. Magnus, the younger son, who was dark of hue and glance, lived with his knights at Nyköping Castle, and Birger governed the entire realm alone. Polished and brilliant at the festal board, but strict in affairs of government, as time went on he became equally venerated by old and young. He kept his promise, establishing peace by well-considered laws, and he did away with the superstitious custom that an accused person should be judged by carrying red-hot iron as a proof of innocence. The Swedish women looked up to him with gratitude, because previously the inheritance from father or mother had gone to their brothers, but he now made a law that the sister should inherit halves with the brother.

He ended his days in Bjälbo. When the surviving warriors of the crusade stood there amid the waxen candles, they said: "Jumala, thy revenge was unavailing. Here on the hearse reposes the most fatherly of kings, though he never wore a kingly crown."

Swedish Chieftains

NOTE

After the death of King St. Erik various scions of royalty struggled for mastery, while the real power slipped more and more into the hands of the great lords who owned wide estates. Among them none was more renowned than the Folkung family to which Birger, the heir of Bjälbo, belonged. He was appointed King's Jarl, and though he never wore the crown, he was one of the strongest rulers Sweden has ever had. He is remembered chiefly as the founder of Stockholm and the father of the system of laws by which Sweden was governed for centuries. Upon the death of the king, in 1250, Birger Jarl aspired to royal honors, but his young son, Valdemar, who on his mother's side descended from the royal family, was made king instead.

The Battle of Hova

AT RAMUNDABODA in the Forest of Tiveden stood an ancient abode of royalty, decked with the skulls of wolves and surrounded by walls. Kings were wont to stop there on their royal progress. One day in midsummer the usual deathly silence was broken by the resounding notes of drums and bagpipes.

Merriment was afoot, that was easy to hear. It was gay King Valdemar giving a feast on the very eve of a battle. His army stood on the side of the forest opposite Hova, for Duke Magnus had made insurrection against his crowned brother, advancing from the south with both Danish and Swedish knights under his banner.

Tiveden was the forest of heathens and wizards, and all sorts of howling and roaring creatures wandered about its marshes like strayed hounds. Here and there among its crags still dwelt men who had never been baptized and never heard a mass, but believed in stocks and stones, and secretly did homage to fountains and boulders. "We let no one through our woods," they said, and began to seek a favorable rendezvous in the depths of the wilderness.

"However long I dwell here, I am never sure of my way," said a solitary old inhabitant of the

Swedish Chieftains

region, by name Hulv Skumble. "Every day I find black ponds where I have never fished, swamps I never knew, herbs I have never picked."

He was propped on crutches and almost hidden beneath his white hair and beard. As he made his way forward, he passed in among such mighty fir trees as he had never dreamed of. The place seemed to him less like a wood than an interminable hall with cloud-high supports. Not a beast could he discover, not a gnat or a fly, nothing flying, not a glimmer of sunlight, hardly anything green. On all sides was only gray and gray. The ground, covered with pine needles, was level and smooth as a floor, but above there was a rushing and roaring in the tree-tops, which twisted and wrestled with their reddish arms. Yet they were so far above that the sound was as though from afar, and down below all was still.

After he had proceeded a space, he caught sight of a fountain. Here the sun shone in, and it was not so desolate. He put down his hand to drink, but drew it quickly back because of the reflection of something over his shoulder. He hastily looked about.

He was standing before the god Tyr (or Ti), whom the other inhabitants of the wood had long searched for without finding him. Yet they had

Battle of Hova

constantly assured each other that he must still be concealed somewhere within his woods.

It was a mossy stump with sharp blue cusps, girdled with an iron band so as not to fall apart. Above the girdle was cut a mouth, which appeared to have many rows of sharp, worm-eaten teeth. These were the arm-bones from human sacrifices, for Tyr was the god of battle, and arms were men's natural weapons. All over the bark, which was honeycombed by maggots, were Thor-wedges, rusty knives, and broken arrowheads, so that the whole god was clad in spines. On one side of him ants had raised a high heap, and amid these symbols of dissolution and murder climbed carelessly the golden beetles of the spring goddess with the seven black marks like the Pleiades on their orange wing-covers.

Hulv Skumble thought it was a good sign to have made such a discovery. He called out to summon others, but held his ears so as not to hear the terrible echo.

A throng of the wood-rovers gathered about the fountain, hanging up their cloaks as a protection for the women. "The bells are ringing at Hova," they said. "The battle has begun, and the priest stands before the altar. But Valdemar sits calmly at his feast in Ramundaboda. In that he does well; he trusts to the forest and us."

Swedish Chieftains

"To-day according to all the old signs is one of the luck-days of the year," answered Hulv Skumble. "But for whom, for Magnus or Valdemar? That may depend on us. The moon, which regulates the tide, is new. You should cut torches for to-night. There is but one thing that will surely give victory to our side, and that is a human sacrifice. But to you, Tyr, I say: You have become powerless. For a long time no one has given you his blood and his limbs. How shall you be able to help us if, when the sun rises, you cannot look at the foe without blinking? I will give you my eyes. I have lived long enough and have no longer any joy of them, only bitterness and grief."

When evening came and the torches were lighted, he pulled loose a couple of Thor-wedges, felt their points, and chose the sharpest. Then he had himself bound to the stump with his hands behind him. When an old Finn took out his eyes with the blade, he yielded up his spirit, and when the eyes were thrown into the water, they sank and lay at the bottom, large and bright, without blinking at the fire.

Thereupon all, women and men alike, were seized with frenzy, swinging their torches up toward the new moon, and horse after horse was led forward and sacrificed amid incantations.

Battle of Hova

Blood was smeared on the tree-trunks and flowed on all sides amid the moss. No one doubted further that on St. John's Eve, when all things grew and sprouted, the old nature spirits would engage in a last desperate strife, crossing their dwarfish spears with the swords of knights.

Sharpening tools were brought, and the wood-rovers whetted their axes. They were ill-armed, many without mail, and none with steel caps. But they knew from of old that the woods were their best protection by confusing the invaders and spreading terror among them. They therefore flayed the sacrificed horses and wrapped themselves in the hides with the bloody side out. The horses' skulls, which they also stripped of skin, they held above them on stakes. Others tore up their shirts and painted grinning heads on breast and belly, throwing cloaks over their faces so that each looked like a great head leaping about. Their ancestors' ancestors had learned this trick from the Finnish dwarfs, who had fought thus long before Tyr had been worshipped as a god.

Several peasants came running, bare-headed and empty-handed. "The duke's men are already out in the marshes," they shouted. "Valdemar's whole army is beaten at Hova. We are lost."

There was a rustling and crackling among the

Swedish Chieftains

branches of the wilderness which had heretofore been so silent. Frightened birds and foxes hurried past. A flock of sheep rushed forward with long leaps, followed by a brown cow, whose bell jingled madly.

The wood-rovers realized that the enemy was hard upon them, and the best bowmen climbed on their axes into the tops of the pines. The others stationed themselves with the women behind the trunks. Torches were stuck into the ground about the spring in an oblique position so that the fire should fall into the water and not set the pine-needles ablaze. Though no human beings could now be seen, the woods around were bright as an illuminated but empty hall.

There was a pause. Then a guide approached with a few armed men. They peered mistrustfully about in all directions, but when they saw the two bright eyes that gazed at them from the spring, they took to their heels and fled. The guide crossed himself and held his ground alone. "O Lord, my God!" he stammered. "We are in Ti's Wood! We are in the secret place of sacrifice where the last of the heathens keep up their rites. Help us, help us!"

At that instant a silent arrow stretched him on the earth.

The armed men soon returned with hundreds

Battle of Hova

of spearmen, but all stood still, horror-smitten and pale. The foremost men shrank back, trampling on the iron shoes of those behind. They beheld everything clearly and brightly before them in the luminous wood, but saw no men, and continually one after another would fall before silent arrows.

With that the whole ghastly army of giant, leaping heads rushed forth, and behind them followed a close battle array of spiked clubs and spears.

But then a gray line of men clad in steel from top to toe swept forward on one flank like a row of wolves. They spread out over the ground. They made great leaps forward despite their heavy armor, and always their swords struck home. Nothing could withstand them. Axes were struck out of opposing hands; arrows and spears broke like reeds on their hauberks. But whenever they encountered an old man or a stripling, they restrained their weapons and clapped him on the shoulder with the words, "Go in peace! Jesus Christ liveth."

Straightway from hundreds of mouths behind them rang through Tiveden's pines the song, "Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison!"

They tore the clothing from the ghost-men. But when they came among the menacing women,

Swedish Chieftains

they raised their sword-hilts and bowed their heads.

He who went in front was both the tallest and one of the most skilful. He had a plain flat helmet with a little dark chink for each of his eyes. His descending sword cleft Tyr to the roots, so that the rotted bones and bark fell on both sides. It was easy to distinguish that this man was the duke himself. Behind him his horse followed like a faithful dog without his needing to hold the bridle.

Gradually the dawn had returned, and the wood-rovers rushed in flight from tree to tree. They felt that their incantations and witchcraft no longer availed, that heathendom was beaten, that the wild wood-gods were fleeing with them and were creeping in under stones and cairns like swine and foxes to die or wail in the long winter nights.

"Woe to us deserted ones!" cried the wood-rovers. "Now the knights will take the land. Look, look, there are doves flying over their helmets!"

The duke's band increased continually, and the knights sang around the blue Magnus banner:

*"Hear, O Christ, Thy warriors' vow!
Be Thy star of grace reflected
On the steel that crowns our brow,
Thus be all the poor protected!"*

Battle of Hova

As soon as they had finished, the song was continued by those in the rear by the marsh:

*"Hear us as we cry once more,
Hear and grant Thy sons release
From the deadly wrath of war!
Give us peace, oh give us peace!"*

Magnus unbound his helmet, displaying his vigorous, brown-lined warrior features. "To the stones of Mora, that we may hail you as king!" cried the army of knights amid ringing jubilation and beating of shields, for now was the land saved from weakness and degeneracy.

Valdemar finally died in prison at Nyköping. Magnus and his shining band of knights, on the contrary, were honored throughout the Northland, and he laid new foundations to the realm. Afterwards he was called Magnus Lock-the-barn, and tradition explains the name in that his laws put a protecting lock on the peasants' barns.

NOTE

King Valdemar unlike his father, Birger Jarl, was more fond of pleasure than of royal deeds. His younger brother, Magnus, felt that he had in himself the qualities of a great ruler, and that he could build up the country which his brother was laying waste. He attacked Valdemar, conquered him at Hova, in 1275, and made himself king. Though he had seized the crown with violence, Magnus was a wise and just king. His protection of the peasants earned him the title Lock-the-barn.

Engelbrekt

THE WORTHY men of Dalecarlia were hurrying to the hillside by the church. There they unfastened their sacks and baskets, for before the peaceful days of Yuletide they had to pay tribute to both priest and provost.

Just at this time in one of the villages the parish priest was taking his tithes. He was not very learned, but nevertheless a good and fatherly man. He examined the calves and kids that were led up, so as to be sure they were at least nine days old. Then he made up his accounts: "Four pounds of candles from the newly married couple—Tenth tithe of butter and sixteenth of a skein of hemp from the widow Malin. Thereto six yards of homespun for mass over the soul of her departed husband." He scrutinized and smelled at a frozen bear's haunch. Ah! well, he could let that pass. One who lived among the peasants himself best knew where the shoe pinched. Things therefore went on in the same friendly fashion as they had since hundreds of years.

Suddenly he looked up and asked, "What's that jingling?"

This, forsooth, was no common bell-note. The grim Danish provost, Jösse Eriksson, came riding along the woods with his men. He did not care

Engelbrekt

to have bells on his horse but instead wore them sewed to his own garments on shoulder, sleeve, and belt. Of brightest silver too they were. He pulled off his gloves and held his narrow white hands half-raised, for Jösse was much too fine and delicate to touch the dirty reins with bare fingers. He laughed so that he shook in the saddle.

"Dullards!" he cried, his smooth-shaven countenance reddening the while, "is it thus you think to discharge your taxes to me and my gracious lord King Erik? Have I not commanded that all should be in ready money, which I can more easily take out of the realm? King Erik down in Denmark, making war with the Holsteiners and the Hanseatic League, will never get a bit of your frozen bears and smoked swine."

"For a year and a day I've never seen a penny of money," answered a young peasant named Mats. But before he found further words, twenty riding whips whistled about his ears. "Then we'll measure after our own fashion," vowed the soldiers, and began fetching horses and mealsacks from the houses. A couple of peasants who defended their doorways were hung up over the smoke in the brew-house, and their women were tied. "They'll always be good for harnessing to a hay-cart," said the soldiers.

Mats ran to the barn, where he had his skis,

Swedish Chieftains

ing which Engelbrekt came to know that the nobles meant to hold a council at Vadstena. He rode thither and strode unexpectedly into the hall.

Even in the midst of his wrath his voice kept its good-natured mountain brogue. "Ye know right well, my noble lords," he began with little circumlocution, "that the best iron comes from Dalecarlia. And that in time of need there are freedom-loving peasants there ye shall know ere long. In the holy Erik's days we had Swedish-born kings who did not oppress us with provosts and unjust taxes. Sweden is the midmost land of the North and the greatest of the three kingdoms, and therefore it was meant by Almighty God to be the chief of them. But this Erik of Pomerania, who is supposed to rule us now, cares no more for Sweden than for a mismanaged stock-farm, where His Grace cares not to dwell. Therefore this union of the kingdoms is burning like a cottage where the hearth has been set not in the middle under the roofhole but in the draught by the door."

When the lords began to oppose him, he took the Bishop of Linköping by the collar and pulled him to the window. Below in the square a thousand Dalecarlians waited in the hot August sun with their bleached hats over their necks and their white sheepskin jackets tied up on their backs.

Engelbrekt

"Look you, bishop," said Engelbrekt, "my life, my savings, all I had, I ventured for the freeing of this land. It is now your turn, my lords. Do ye all write straightway that ye refuse Erik your faith and obedience! Otherwise I will lead you down to the folk in the square."

The nobles then had to obey.

Later the Dalecarlians again threw their bows over their shoulders and marched away with their chieftains. In the rear followed horses laden with barrels of arrows. The discipline was excellent, and scarcely as much as a hen was taken from the farms by violence.

They halted in front of the fortress of Ringstadaholm, where the Motala River billowed around the walls on all sides.

Some of the men sat down in a cottage to cook, and Mats was the hungriest man in the camp. A young fellow brought out a long iron tube. Into this he poured something which he took out of a firkin. It looked like dust or bad gray meal. Then he stuffed moss tightly into the tube and handed it to Mats. "I see you can stir gruel, you lazy loon," he said. "But touch a burning stick of wood to that and you'll learn how to make lightning."

Mats stood there with a face as long as if it were mirrored in a tin spoon. For him who had

Swedish Chieftains

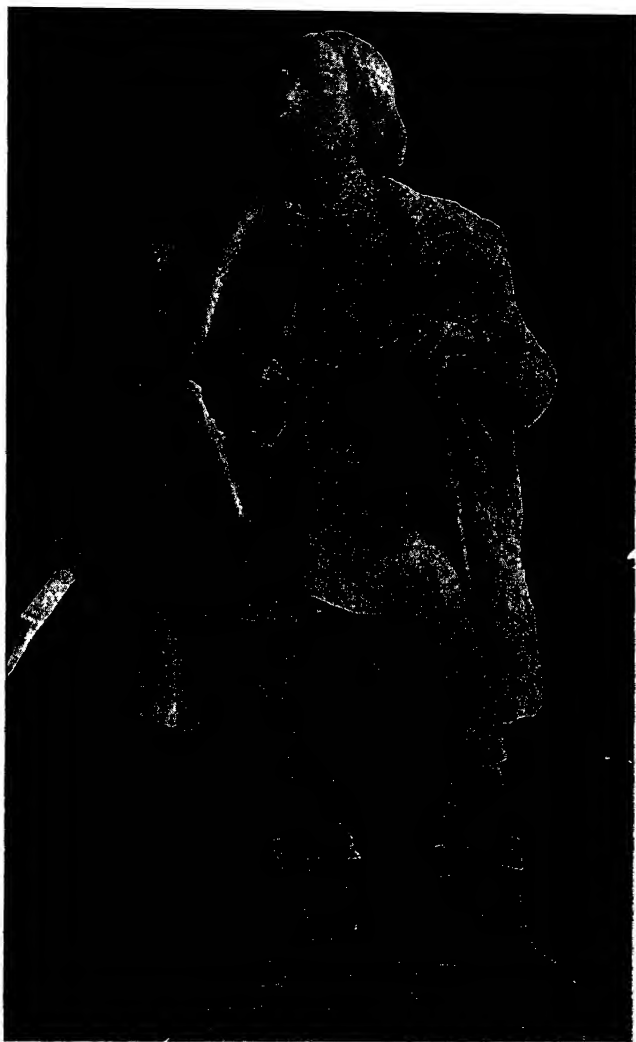
lived up in the woods everything was equally new and astonishing. He thought there was no need to pick out a piece of wood, but calmly held the iron tube in the fire on the hearth.

A bang the like of which he had never heard sent coals and firebrands up to the roof and threw all the Dalecarlians against the wall. When at last he came to himself, he was sitting in a corner, and there was hardly a whole pot or bench in the room.

Engelbrekt hurried in. When he saw what had happened, he took a little of the powder out of the uninjured firkin and displayed it on his hand. "Dal men," he said, "gunpowder has now come into the world, whether to our grief or joy no one can tell."

As an answer to his words there came a gleam on the castle walls about them. In the whole of Ringstadaholm there was but one man experienced enough to fire a shot, and he was therefore called the gun-master. It was he who now came out with a portfire to discharge the single cannon. It lay before him on an iron crotch, propped behind on its own long tail, and it looked like a long, gaping lizard.

On the tower above stood the German provost Styke with his hands stuck into his hair, full of wonder as to how the thing would go. Cau-



STATUE OF ENGELBREKT IN ÖREBRO

Engelbrekt

tiously, turning his head away, the gun-master stretched out the portfire on the end of a stick. But the gun just leaped up on its tail, spouted shot and fire into the clouds and tumbled backwards into the castle. Such was the only shot fired from Ringstadaholm.

So the Dalecarlians went on. Forgetful of hunger and weariness, they kept in fine spirits. They had a swinging beam set between two supports, with weights fastened on one end and a leather pouch on the other. On this they placed boulders and stones which they then slung against the walls. Some of the stones flew as far as the castle courtyard. When they saw how the sparks flew, they became more elated than ever and sent garbage and dead horses the same way. Here's something for your dinner, Styke!" they shouted.

Engelbrekt went up to them indignantly. "You must learn to fight better than that," he exhorted them.

"Well, father, you've been at lords' houses when you were young, you are an esquire," they retorted around him. "Teach us the new way, teach us to shoot with powder!"

A smile of doubt stole through his beard. Nevertheless he got them to make a great cannon of iron bars welded together and girdled with iron bands. The monster was half buried in the

Swedish Chieftains

earth and tied with chains to two piles. They had only a couple of jars of powder, so they had to economize in pouring it into their cannon. Stones for shot, however, they could get from the stream beside them.

"You know everything," they said, coming to Engelbrekt again. "It's beginning to drizzle, and the portfire won't burn. What shall we do?"

"I've a firestone cooked for you here," he replied, "that burns only when it's wet." As soon as he took it out from under his coat and held it in the rain, it burst into flame.

Mats took the fire to the cannon. But bang! it burst into small pieces, and there was a rain of earth around their hats, while volleys of laughter echoed from the castle. The Dalecarlians were so mortified that one of them stood and wept.

"I think the bow and arrow is still your rightful weapon," said Engelbrekt. "But I've kept you at work here so that the castle folk should not notice what my carpenters have put together on the other side of the point. Come!"

They followed him around the point. There on the water swam a complete wooden tower five stories high. Still hot with vexation, they stormed into the tower, as many as could find room. They then let it float downstream against the castle.

Quickly they strung their bows against their

Engelbrekt

feet. To take aim at such a distance was of no avail; instead they shot slantingly up into the air and let the shafts rattle over the walls. "He's crafty, our Engelbrekt. Now we'll capture the castle," they shouted. With that they began to sing:

*"May God and all His saints be praised!
We've here our bows and arms upraised.
'Tis thus we fight, 'tis thus we play.
Sir Provost, yield you while you may!
If you refuse, then shun our strife
And swim your best to save your life!"*

As soon as Ringstadaholm had opened its gates, Engelbrekt went on from castle to castle, deposing the provosts. At last he came together with Erik Puke, his lieutenant, who had led the insurrection in the north. Dark and sunburnt, scarred and boisterous, Puke rose in his saddle and swung his hat. His sword lay half-drawn in the sheath. "Brother, we've hardly fought more than thirteen weeks," he cried, "and already Sweden is liberated!"

NOTE

Civil wars, lawlessness, and dissensions were the order of the day for a hundred years after Magnus-lock-the-barn had died. In 1350 came the terrible plague known as the Black Death which swept over the Scandinavian peninsula and destroyed a third of the population of Sweden.

Swedish Chieftains

The first strong ruler after Magnus Lock-the-barn was a woman, Queen Margareta, who by inheritance and marriage became the regent of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Thus began the union which was given formal sanction at Kalmar, in 1397, and is therefore known as the Kalmar Union. Margareta had her young kinsman, Erik of Pomerania, crowned king of all three countries, while she continued to rule as before.

The Kalmar Union, which began in 1397, was an unhappy one for Sweden and Norway. It is true, Queen Margareta brought back peace and law and order, but she lived in Denmark and favored Denmark at the expense of the other two. Things came to a much worse pass when the young king, Erik of Pomerania, himself assumed the powers of government. To finance Denmark's wars, he taxed the other two countries heavily and sent Danish provosts to collect the taxes. The cruelty of these foreign servants of the Crown brought on in Sweden a series of revolts which continued for ninety years and ended in freeing the country from foreign rule.

Many of these revolts were fostered in Dalecarlia, where the independent peasant-miners were the backbone of Swedish resistance to oppression. The first took place in 1434 and was led by a miner, Engelbrekt Engelbrektsson. Engelbrekt was made regent, but had to share his power with a nobleman, Karl Knutsson Bonde. Only two years after the liberation Engelbrekt was treacherously murdered, and Karl Knutsson Bonde was alone the leader of the patriotic party. He was made king in 1448, but there were powerful enemies arrayed against him who made common cause with the Danish invaders. Karl Knutsson was sometimes king, sometimes a penniless fugitive. In 1470, shortly after he had been made king for the third time, he died.

The Little Sister

BARE-FOOTED and with shorn hair, a little girl knelt before the high altar in the cloister church of Vadstena. Though she was but nine years old, she had just been crowned as a nun. She was clad in a sober gray dress of homespun, her girdle had but a wooden clasp, and above the black veil was fastened a crown of white linen with five borders of blood-red cloth.

Karl Knutsson was king at this time, and the little girl was one of his daughters. Her mother lay buried a few steps from the altar where St. Birgitta's silver casket was now raised. The king stepped forward in royal attire and embraced the little nun to say farewell, but, filled with deep longing, she had already caught sight of the waiting nuns at the convent door. With their white crowns they looked like other brides and queens, and oh what a sublime peace beamed from their countenances! She knew that the next time she was carried out through that door she would be lying dead on her bier. To remind her of this, four sisters lifted out a bier with earth upon it, but she hurried past and threw herself joyously on the bosom of the abbess. "Lady Abbess," said the bishop, "I entrust this bondwoman of God to the concealment of your

Swedish Chieftains

hands. When the day of accounting cometh, restore her yet more holy than you have received her!" Behind her the door closed forever. She was now a nun in Vadstena Convent.

"Are you so old," she asked, looking up into the eyes of the abbess, "that you can remember when the holy Lady Birgitta was still among the living?" She herself had the same name as the saint, of which she was glad and proud.

"Little sister," answered the abbess, smiling sadly—and from that time the nuns never called her anything but the little sister—"none of us is old enough for that. We nuns sometimes see the saint in our dreams, but that occurs only when some very great happiness is before us. Like a good mother she goes about watching over us to see that the fire is quenched at night and all the candles put out. Therefore Vadstena can never be burned."

The little sister wondered whether she would ever be worthy to dream such a dream. But in the first days there were many new things to think about. She was allowed to kiss the rosary which had belonged to Sister Ramborg, a nun who had lived to be a hundred. Sister Ramborg had been one of the first to enter the convent, all of whom were named with special reverence. She was allowed to stroke the altarcloths which had

The Little Sister

been embroidered by the skillful Anna Klasdotter. She might also sit beside Botilda Pedersdotter and watch how she set the most beautiful writing on the parchment sent her by the Bishop of Skara. When the nun had finished a couple of pages, she went down to the monk's window and laid the writing in a cask which was set in the wall. When the cask was swung around, a monk stood on the other side to take what lay in the bottom. For on the other side was a monastery. The monks were learned and serious men but might never meet the nuns otherwise than at the conversation window. They had a great hall full of books, the most precious of which hung locked to the walls with chains.

The most pleasant thing of all, however, for the little sister was to play with the doll which she had kept among her small effects. It was a wooden doll with a skirt of silver brocade. She dressed and undressed her and gave her an evening bath.

But when Saturday came, the abbess made her rounds and saw to it that the nuns had nothing forbidden in their coffers. Then the little sister too had to open her coffer and give up the doll, though the tears ran down. "A handmaid of God should possess nothing," said the abbess gently,

Swedish Chieftains

taking the doll with her. "You will now sew and make lace with us elders."

But the little sister thought of the doll the whole evening. Three times during meals the abbess rapped on the table with her knife, and all rose with the words, "Ave Maria, ave Maria, ave Maria!" Afterwards they were allowed to divert themselves in the orchard and to converse without gossip or vain words, but the little sister went off moodily by herself and grieved bitterly.

At bedtime she crept up on her homespun bed. It was, however, hard for her to go to sleep, and she lay and stared with tear-filled eyes into the misty gray springtime light. Cautiously she stole to the door and ventured a shy glance at the other open cells. There on their beds lay the nuns in their night-dresses with belt and veil. When she saw how calmly they slept in their shrouds, far from the storms of the world, she longed yet more deeply to become soon as they. The watchwoman came and shut the doors, so that all was quiet, and the little sister once more drew over herself the leathern coverlet.

She then felt that a kind hand was laid on her head, and when she looked up, there stood leaning above her an old lady who was more beautiful and gentle than any other human being. Over her white hair quivered a circle of brightest light.

The Little Sister

"Thou fairest little blossom in all my garden," said the woman in tones of a mother, "why does thy heart throb so hard while the others are sleeping? I am Birgitta, who will change thy first sorrow to fragrant rose-leaves and will soon bring thee to yet fuller joy, where there shall be no more weeping."

The little sister caught her by the hand, but with that a bell sounded. Though it was but three or four in the morning, she rose up, shivering. She lighted her candle and followed the train of the other nuns into the church, where they greeted the dawn with a hymn of praise. Two by two they passed out to an open grave, where the abbess took earth in her hand and spoke about death. Then they heard mass and went to sew in a great hall with shining windows. There no one might talk. But the little sister was equally glad of heart in the conventual silence, and no one heard her lament any more.

Sometimes to be sure it happened that a nun sank her head and was disturbed by thoughts of the world. Then, as it were, a wave of unrest went through all their minds, and the culprit was put into a dark room to amend herself with prayer. When she came out she was again as before, and at the first evening bell all the sisters stood before her in turn and whispered, "For-

Swedish Chieftains

give us if any of us has troubled you, as we from our hearts forgive you!"

Kinsfolk and friends would sometimes knock at the "world's door," and the little sister might then speak with them through a grating. But as the days passed, she became more and more forgotten by the world's people, who had their various forms of strife to think about. On the other hand dying nobles often came to the brothers' monastery. They slept on straw in the hospital, happy in their last hour to hear the sound of bells, and the king's daughter washed the sick men's clothes.

She was no longer nine years old, but grew to be nineteen and then something and twenty. Yet she was still called the little sister, because she was so slender and her step so light, and she was so pale and transparent as she walked under the elms with her white crown. The sisters did not wonder that such a tranquil devotion could not exist long on the earth. One morning they found her so weak that they sent for the father confessor, who set a burning taper in her hands and said, "May God kindle for you the everlasting light!"

When she had passed away, the abbess took the nuns with her to her cupboard to hunt out the doll that she had laid there and keep it as an

The Little Sister

innocent remembrance of the dead. But in the place where the doll had been stored lay the freshest rose-leaves, though it was but early in the spring. The abbess took them out and placed them in her mantle. Every time she thought she had them all, another mound of roses would breathe out their fragrance from the darkened cupboard, till she could carry no more. Then she went down and strewed all the petals over the little sister's heart.

In the evening the monks came and carried her down on a bier into the church. There she was buried to the nuns' vesper song, while the last afterglow of the sunset shone in through the pointed windows to the west.

NOTE

The cloister at Vadstena was founded by St. Birgitta, a daughter of the Folkung family, and perhaps the most famous woman Sweden has ever had. She was married to Ulv Gudmarsson, and after his death left her home in Östergötland to go to Rome. She lived there for many years, and though she was often severe in her denunciations of kings and popes, she was held in high veneration. In her old age she undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which broke down her health, and she died in Rome in 1373. Some years afterwards she was canonized by the pope. The great stone church at Vadstena still bears her name, and she is buried there.

The Battle of Brunkeberg

ON THE night of October tenth, 1471, countless fires flamed on Brunkeberg. Brave King Christian, founder of the Oldenburg dynasty, had encamped there with his Danes to conquer Stockholm and get Sweden in his power. Behind the gabions of their entrenchments the soldiers were polishing their guns. The largest cannon were splendidly adorned with grinning faces and gaping lions. Some were long and thin like dragons and were therefore called serpents and snakes. The soldiers raised themselves merrily on their heels, smacked their soles, and had a pet name for every cannon. "Hey, Wolfhound!" they cried to a great mortar that stood gaping up at the stars, "to-morrow will be your time to howl and whine. King Christian has vowed that then he'll thrash the Swedes' fellow Sten Sture like a page."

In the royal tent sat Christian, knightly of carriage, big of frame, strong, and surrounded by Denmark's choicest chivalry, who had been hardened in daily feats of arms. Over him fluttered the Danebrog, the red flag with its white cross, the famous banner which of old during a battle had floated down from the very heavens.

Farther north on the Brunkeberg Ridge it was

Battle of Brunkeberg

wooded and dark. There stood a chapel of St. George and a hospital for lepers. When these went about the slope they had always to swing a rattle or a small bell, so that well folks might hear in time to flee them. On this night there were not many of the wretches in this gloomy dwelling who were able to sleep.

As the dawn began, steel caps were gleaming on the road from Järva. There Sten Sture and his peasant forces had heard mass on their knees and been shriven. They believed that they had seen blood dripping from the image of Christ on the uplifted cross. Assured that they fought in the righteous cause, they leaped up and armed themselves. As cognizance they wore straw and leaves on their helmets. Three hundred riders in armor now came up from the city by way of Kungsholm to support them, and Sten Sture rode forward and spoke to the army. He was a leader after the people's heart; cautious, true to his promise, just and conscientious, and the peasants knew he was their friend. "If ye would ever enjoy freedom in Sweden," he said, "stand firm by me to-day without shrinking!" "That we will with the help of God!" shouted all, raising their hands. They then struck their shields together amid war cries. Dauntlessly they proceeded toward the sandy ridge, singing:

Swedish Chieftains

*"In God's name we fare to-day,
For His grace we humbly pray.
Stockholm town will gladly greet us.
Grant that Christian dares to meet us!"*

Arrows were duly set on the string, and those who had firelocks lighted their fuses. Slowly the chief banner rose among the firs and with a thousand voices the peasants struck up St. George's song. But the Danes stood up better in the first encounter, and soon the banner reeled and was borne back down the slope. Yet again the peasants advanced and strove with sword and spear, but once more had to retreat. Thinking it would be better to meet the enemy on level ground, Sten Sture then marched on the Danes who stood around St. Klara's Convent. Before his horse ran a broad-shouldered peasant named Strong Björn, who cleared the way with rapid blows.

Amid desperate fighting, the Danes, closely pursued, made for the hilltop. Here fire and sparks rolled up from their burning entrenchments, which had been attacked by the townsmen under the gallant Knut Posse. In the midst of the hottest turmoil King Christian in his gleaming armor fought like a hero. With his own hand he felled Knut Posse, so that he lay a while as if dead on the ground, but he himself was so badly

Battle of Brunkeberg

wounded that the blood ran from his mouth, and his men had to lead him from the field. Strange streaks appeared in the sky, and the Swedes shouted that it was St. Erik's sword. The two chief banners had now met, and five hundred Danish nobles lay bleeding around the Danebrog when the Swedes finally seized the holy standard and brought it to the earth.

Attacked in the rear by a Swedish band who had meanwhile circled the mountain behind the woods on the north, the enemy fled in a cloud of dust down to Blasieholm. In a tangled throng they rushed out on a bridge which led over the Näckström, but it had been secretly sawed away underneath and fell crashing into the water. Those who had not fallen or been drowned had to throw down their weapons and surrender at discretion. For that day Sten Sture escaped being thrashed like a page.

With beating hearts the wives and maidens had followed the battle from the castle wall of Stockholm. Weeping with joy, they hurried down to greet friends and kinsmen as they marched in with Sten Sture. High and low embraced, and the church bells rang. With psalms and mass the Swedes thanked God and St. George for the victory that had saved our land.

Voluntary gifts were collected. With these

Swedish Chieftains

was raised in the Storkyrka the radiant statue of St. George and the dragon, in which the knight has not yet sunk his sword.

Sten Sture then became a wise regent. In his time the first book was printed in Sweden, and in Upsala was founded the first University of the Northland.

King Christian found it wisest to let the twigs for his switch grow green in the woods for some time to come. But when he was dead, Sten Sture had many a fight with his son Hans, who was even crowned King of Sweden. The Danish queen was finally shut up in Stockholm Castle, which she defended like a man. Only when vault and cellar were full of the dead did she yield herself prisoner.

Sten Sture conducted her to the boundary, but on the way home he sickened and died at Jönköping. The city provost disguised himself as a merchant and brought home the body to Stockholm on a sledge, having wrapped it up in hides. One of the attendants, who resembled Sten in build and carriage, assumed his dead master's clothes and chain of knighthood, and sat on his horse. The old regent had often been troubled with a severe eye disease. The servant therefore tied a bandage over his eyes, and wherever they halted for the night, he at once went to bed and

Battle of Brunkeberg

had the room darkened. The misfortune which had happened was only generally known when he came to Stockholm. The nobles of the Swedish party had by then had time to take their measures, and Svante Nilsson was chosen regent. His father had been old Lord Sten's friend and comrade in arms, and on his mother's side he was descended from a knight of the Sture blood.

Sten Sture's grave is in the cathedral of Strängnäs, and Sweden has never ceased to honor him as one of her greatest and noblest men.

NOTE

During his last illness King Karl Knutsson gave over the government to his young kinsman and helper, Sten Sture, but warned him against striving after the crown, which he said had been his own undoing. Sten Sture was made regent and defeated the Danes at Brunkeberg in 1471. His rule was marked by the founding of Upsala University in 1477. Sten Sture the Elder died in 1503 and was succeeded by his kinsman Svante Nilsson Sture, whose son was Sten Sture the Younger.

Young Lord Sten

THE SACRISTY AND THE BISHOP'S CASTLE

YOUNG LORD STEN sat sunning himself in the window embrasure at Örebro one day early in the year 1512.

He held up his hands so that the sun might shine full upon them. The darkness of Yuletide had crept dismally over the earth with its long shadows, but when the holy day of New Year's was rung in, the air at once grew bright. Now the castle moat glittered as on a day in June.

"It is always like this," exclaimed Sten. "January, you are the lovely summer month of winter, though you have frost in your beard."

A monk with snow-covered shoes stepped over the threshold. His cloak was stiff and distended, and beneath it rang a suit of mail.

"The year is but a child in January," said he, as if to continue Lord Sten's idea. "It believes that everything is play. But then comes February with its sharp reminders which pierce like an awl. So it is with you, Lord Sten. Nineteen, hardly more. And already knight and master of a castle. But pull on your iron gloves! February weather is here!"

Sten grew pale with foreboding. "Is it something about my father the regent?"

Young Lord Sten

The monk looked about to be sure that the others did not hear. "Our regent, Lord Svante, was holding council with the miners at Västerås," he whispered, bending as he did so. "As he stepped from the table he reeled over, and when we tried to raise him we saw that he was dead. It is still concealed. This is no time to weep, my lord. Consider that you are the hope of all the Swedish party!"

Sten brushed his hand over his eyes and rose with the shrewd deliberateness which was native to the Stures. "Who are you and why do you not follow me instead of going off?" he asked the monk, who stood picking the bits of ice out of his gray beard.

"Who am I? A hermit who lives under the pines and can keep silence. Therefore was I sent. My road went past here. No, I have no desire to follow you, my lord. I have been young myself, and I know the young. Drums, pipes, dancing, fooleries, and big words — that is youth!"

"You do not know the Stures yet," thought Sten as he mounted to the saddle. Gently, with even a trace of diffidence, he enjoined his followers that if there should be a feud in the land, they should be faithful to the Swedish cause and not merely fight to get money and fine clothes. There

Swedish Chieftains

was surely no one of the household who would not have been content with an empty bag on his horse's back for a saddle rather than desert such a master. But there was no time to lose, and quickly choosing a few of them, he hastened off.

Without a conflict he gradually got the leading citizens of the land on his side, but the great nobles were envious of the Stures' influence and voted that old Lord Erik Trolle, who favored Denmark, should be regent. There were therefore many stormy meetings and much dispute, but the peasants clamored that they wanted Lord Sten, and for the sake of peace he was finally elected and acknowledged.

The first years passed, and there was seldom time to sit on any sunny bench in the window.

On the day of a fair there spread in Upsala the rumor that the regent was approaching along the highroad. Merchants straightway knotted up their purses, hucksters shut up their booths, and it became as empty in the wineshops as it was crowded before the cathedral. "He's thoughtful of us common folk and doesn't allow his provosts to use violence on us," said the peasants. "And how modest he sits his horse there in his brown velvet!" the matrons cried. "If he has a bit of ermine on his sleeves, it's no more than right."

Young Lord Sten

Lord Sten went into the sacristy. He was round of cheek and had a small head with bright hair combed backward, but his hand-grip was honest and good.

They were energetic and independent-minded men who met there in the light that fell from the high window. Learned and ready-witted, Doctor Hemming Gad stood on one side of the table, he who in old Lord Sten's day had lived as ambassador at Rome and beheld the orgies of Pope Borgia. He propped his cheek on his hand, screwed up his keen eyes, and appeared to have his own thoughts about the world. Directly facing him on the other side smiled the sly Brask, who some years before had been made Bishop of Linköping. At the end was enthroned the Archbishop, Gustav Trolle, thin and tall, with lean, dry features and half-sunken eyes. Councillors and deans filled the room, and behind them in the open wall-cupboard gleamed golden chalices, pearls, and sapphires, testifying to the ancient power and glory of the church.

Lord Sten went straight forward to Trolle and offered his hand. "The lords of the Danish persuasion would rather have your father as regent than me," were his words. "But let us forget old grudges, and do you remember that I have

Swedish Chieftains

done my best to give you your archbishop's crozier!"

"Our kin have always hated each other," answered Trolle with cold disdain as he turned away. "Lay your favor-seeking hand in that of the peasants! We Trolles have a white and sensitive skin which does not appreciate such hearty hand-clasps. Ride back to your Stockholm; I ride to Stäket. Then let matters go ill or well, as may be."

Though the door was shut, the dispute was heard out in the church. The clerics recognized both Sture's calm and direct voice and the slow, almost whispering tones of Trolle. The archbishop had a way of whispering so that every word could be distinguished clearly through the whole cathedral.

By sunset Sten was already on his way to Stockholm. The folk at the fair grumbled, and the pewter pot did not go with its usual speed from beard to beard.

The following autumn a flotilla landed in the bays around Stäket, and Lord Sten's men began to lay siege to the archbishop's castle. "Here's the troll in his den," cried Trolle from the window with a hard smile. "Do you think, you peasants, you can shoot through the walls of Stäket with your wooden arrows?" He then sat calmly

Young Lord Sten

down to table under a cloth-of-gold canopy. Sons of the most famous families in the realm observed him to instruct themselves in etiquette, and down in the courtyard the pages tamed his hunting falcons or practised themselves in feats of arms.

There was plenty of provisions, and in the long winter nights when the chaplain read aloud, the fires crackled merrily on the hearths. Trolle sat looking into the fire with his thin long fingers stretched out along the arms of the chair. "Many little flames dance over the wood, and many small crowns over the Swedish people," he said, "but none of them is brilliant enough to quench the others and make a single great flame. I need a good Danish sword to strike off fifty or eighty heads, if the lords here are to be taught again to speak to their archbishop on their knees."

Only when summer came again to the meadows did the castle provost begin secretly to count with alarm the last smoked and salted lambs' carcasses in the cellar. One evening while they were busy setting the table, it pleased the Lord Archbishop to put on his festal garments. Pages of the chamber ran with his pearl-sewn slippers, others smoothed the wrinkles from his silken gloves. In the hall the minstrels trilled and tuned up, and the carver bowed from the doorway before the empty chair of the gracious father.

Swedish Chieftains

Then quite unexpectedly the short, rapid steps of Trolle were heard on the stairway. He walked as quietly as he spoke, and for that very reason all recognized that it was he. The carver was so astounded that he tumbled head over heels and lay all his fat length on the inlaid floor. He was a huge fellow with a silver sharpener and carving knife at his belt. His cap, which was edged with feathers, rolled half across the hall. But Trolle looked neither at the carver nor at his feathery adornment; he hurried past up into the tower of his armory. From this point the view was widest.

The armory was faintly lighted by a red glow. Mirrored in the dusky breastplates, greaves, and morions were gleams as of flames in the dark, unscoured horn lanterns. "There's a fire near Stockholm," observed the armorer, who was rolling a cask of arrows to the door. Trolle rubbed his hands delightedly and answered, "Do you know what it is, faithful old servant? That's the gallant Sören Norby coming with his Danes to free us. They're harrying and burning."

"Let us not rejoice too soon," remarked the armorer, as he tilted the cask to get it through the narrow door. "There are three unknown men here who stand staring up the steps. They have assuredly something on their minds." With

Young Lord Sten

that the strangers advanced several steps higher, pointed to their bloody garments, and called to Trolle, "Most gracious father, the Danes are beaten, and we are Danish prisoners. Lord Sten has sent us to show what his enemies have to expect."

Their words were heard down in the courtyard, and the garrison began to murmur. "Quiet, quiet!" cautioned Trolle from the window with a gesture half of blessing, half of command, though his face was nearly ashen gray. "I will be rowed to Stockholm and answer for myself before the lords. However they think, they will find in the end that I am not lying in my grave."

More proud and cold than ever, he came forward at the national assembly in Stockholm. "You are a murderer, you have caused the death of many for the sake of your own ambition," cried the lords. "Though we should be excommunicated, your castle shall be demolished, and you lose your crozier. For Sweden's liberty we will venture life and limb."

One after another advanced and set his seal to the written decree of Trolle's deposition, but cunning Bishop Brask bent down closer to the parchment than the others. Unobserved, he hid under the wax a little slip of paper on which was

Swedish Chieftains

written, "To this act I am forced and constrained."

Followed by the curses of the assembly, Trolle then rode home to Stäket.

There now rained over the walls not only arrows but balls of stone and iron. A water-gate was left ajar, and as soon as the dark set in, the besiegers began to creep through it. They came into a narrow passage and rushed eagerly forward. "Now we'll capture the troll's nest," they vowed. But the passage led into the wall itself and kept going round and round until it grew to be a mere crevasse. Then those who were inmost realized that they had been enticed into an ambush. They tried in alarm to turn back, but those in the rear pressed on without a suspicion of the danger. When the whole passage was full, there was a rusty clang, and a thick iron door slid down from the roof, barring the entrance. There stood the men in the pitchy darkness, unable to go forward or back, fairly swallowed by the grim and dreaded fortress. Their cries of desperation pierced the walls only like a soft rustling of the wind, and Trolle, looking down from his window over the wall, exclaimed, "Aha! old dragon, you've eaten your fill now for many a day."

Tortured with thirst and hunger, the imprisoned wretches soon did not know whether

Young Lord Sten

it was night or day, and they prepared themselves to die. Then the man farthest in cried that he had long heard water dripping on the other side of the wall, but that his hands were bloody with tearing to get the stones loose, and he could do no more. His neighbor then crept forward between his knees and continued the work as long as he could. The next then did the same and the next, till he who had first been the inmost was now last. The hole they had made was so large that a man could creep through it, but beyond was a deep well. Early the next morning a bucket was lowered into the well, and one of the men climbed in. "The windlass works hard to-day," grumbled the old servant who stood above and turned it. "Silence for your life, old man!" whispered the soldier, as he rose dripping from the bucket before him. The servant, who hated his master, helped the soldier to hoist up the others, and the dawn was still only gray. When they were all up, they drew their swords. They hastened to the tower gate, and Trolle's own men, assembling in his bedroom, forced him to surrender. When he was led to the camp, the people wanted to kill him, but Lord Sten, who was also present, magnanimously protected him and had him sent to the monastery at Västerås.

Meanwhile the castle doors were lifted from

Swedish Chieftains

their hinges, and the peasants trailed their muddy wooden shoes over the oaken floors. Broken masonry sent up clouds of dust around their crow-bars. It was happy labor to demolish the fortress whence strife and destruction had so long flown forth over the land like black ravens. From among the bricks they pulled out small caskets with the bones of saints which had been there immured, and which they now kissed and concealed under their garments. Soon the whole castle was leveled to the ground, and where it had stood fishermen dried their nets and pulled out their ropes, as they drew their smacks through the mirror-like tranquillity of the inlet.

THE BATTLE OF BRÄNNKYRKA

"I will try yet again to crush Trolle's enemies," thought King Christian, who ruled over the Danes. He was the grandson of the prince who had fought so valiantly at Brunkeberg. Like him the new king wished to conquer Sweden, and as time went past he was given the name of The Tyrant. He sailed forth with a large fleet, and at Brännkyrka near Stockholm the armies came to an action.

The Swedish standard was borne by the young esquire, Gustaf Eriksson Vasa. He was fresh and boisterous as a north wind and impelled the most surly Uplander to sing with him in the din of

Young Lord Sten

battle. The Swedes had begun to yield before a violent attack and were nearly beaten, when he shook his square-cut yellow locks from his forehead and rushed forward with the banner half lowered like the bowsprit of a ship. Then the men took to sword and axe instead of arquebus. The banner fluttered, and the troops surrounded and followed him victoriously along the edge of the wood where sixteen hundred peasants finally lay bleeding.

In the days that followed, joy of the victory swept over Stockholm, though Christian the Tyrant still had his fortified camp in Södermalm. Doughty young Gustaf Vasa was privileged to quench his thirst from a tankard at Lord Sten's own table. He had welts on his hands from the flagstaff and splinters in his forehead, but of that he was proud. There were no foreign court customs at the board, but all was simple, and the warriors laughed to heart's content at the pointed sallies of Doctor Hemming Gad.

"I see, Gad, that you are sharpening your gadfly dart," Lord Sten said jocosely one evening. "Is it I you mean to sting?"

The seventy-year patriarch, former chamberlain of Pope Borgia, smiled slightly and shook his white hair. "Lord Sten, you have not entrusted me with heroic affairs as your father used.

Swedish Chieftains

In his days I was the Danes' worst enemy, but you have given me plenty of time to think. During this time I have gradually come to know that everything is as it must be. Therefore what I am about to tell you did not surprise me. I have heard that King Christian shortly intends to invite you to his ship so as to kiss you on the cheek and talk about peace between brethren. He is, you see, a well-intentioned man, is King Christian."

Dame Christina Gyllenstierna, the dignified mistress of the regent's household, who was about to pour out his wine, set the tankard down sharply on the table. "It's a piece of treachery," she burst out, and the lords of the council agreed. But the Doctor continued, "If necessary, Christian himself is willing to ride to Österhaninge Church to meet you, providing you will send me and five other hostages to him."

Lord Sten looked more sternly at the lady than was his wont, as he answered, "It would be ignoble to suspect an enemy of treachery which it would be impossible for us to commit ourselves. If there are any who have the courage to follow Doctor Hemming, let them signify it by raising their goblets!" Many raised their goblets, among whom the most eager was the undaunted squire Gustaf Vasa.

Young Lord Sten

One September morning when the leaves were golden he therefore rowed out with the other five to Saltsjön. Behind them lay Stockholm, wall-surrounded on its island, and between its towers glimmered the distant waters of Lake Mälär. Suddenly a barge filled with Danes foamed treacherously up. They leaped over into the boat, seized the Swedes, and took them along as prisoners to the fleet, which was ready to set sail.

The royal ship swam in the middle with drooping flags and red awnings, which were sustained by wooden figures painted with flesh tints. Some represented giants, others mermaids.

The esquire, who was as hot with wrath as before with gaiety, vowed by his Vasa shield to be of good memory and never forget such a base deception, but Doctor Hemming eyed him shrewdly, clapped him on the shoulder, and bade him learn that everything was as it must be. Therewith the doctor bent his knee before the royal ship and bowed as he swept his hat along the thwarts of the barge.

For two days Lord Sten sat waiting by the priests' fire at Österhaninge without seeing any King Christian. While he rode back, the fleet was beginning to hoist anchor so as to sail home to Denmark with the prisoners. But the peasants

Swedish Chieftains

surrounded Lord Sten, pressed his hands and shouted, "After such a trick no Swede will go to meet King Christian again without an arquebus on his back. We will live and die for the land we have inherited from our fathers and for our beloved regent!"

THE FIRST SHOT AT ASUNDEN LAKE

Into the sound at Stäket not long after glided a splendid ship with many Swedish nobles and foreigners on board. The most distinguished of the foreigners was Arcimboldus, vendor of papal indulgencies. He had promised the pope and King Christian to help Trolle, but the gifts and representations of the Swedes had so mollified him that instead he was on his way to Arboga to ratify the judgment on the deposed archbishop. He sat sunken amid cushions in a tent in the stern, propping his elbows on the great chest of pardon money which he had collected.

When Trolle was duly deposed, Arcimboldus left the country. But Christian the Tyrant, who thought that the indulgence-monger had gained too much favor with the Swedes, robbed him of his well-laden coffers. Instead of being melted into golden ornaments or devoutly-pealing bells in the Eternal City, the Swedish pardon money was swiftly transformed into Danish muskets, powder-flasks, and crossbows. Nor was it long

Young Lord Sten

before the thunders began to roll in front of Borgholm and Kalmar. Followed by Scotch, French, Holstein, and Mecklenburg mercenaries, the Danish banner advanced through the woods of Småland toward West Gothland.

Lord Sten drew up his peasants on the frozen Asunden Lake. Holes were cut in the ice on the sides, and on the shore behind was raised a barrier of trees and bushes as protection for the rear. The peasants blew on their hands and stamped on the ground to keep warm, and, eager for the combat, swung the jagged iron balls that were fastened with chains to their clubs. On the opposite side the enemy had built a breastwork of wagons, where they stood with widespread legs bending their crossbows.

Lord Sten rode boldly forward at the head of his people. His light-colored horse was visible from a long distance, and a traitor pointed it out to the enemy. The first cannonball went ricocheting over the ice and pierced both the horse and the regent's leg. A Danish priest thereupon leaped up on the breastwork with a cross, crying, "On the church doors there is already a bull of excommunication against the Swedish lords who demolished the archbishop's castle. We are now here in the name of the Holy Father at Rome to chastise the heretics."

Swedish Chieftains

"To battle for our righteous cause!" retorted the peasants, and for a time powder smoke enveloped the fight like a mist. But the captain of the Swedes lay bleeding on the ice, and time after time they were repulsed. They barely succeeded in carrying him to a sledge before they spread in wild rout over woods and frozen swamps.

At Ramundeboda on the other side of Tiveden Forest the sledge halted before the cloister of the last monks of St. Anthony. It was a mossy little structure almost hidden under the pines. The trees stuck their branches through the ragged roof, sighing and roaring outside the empty window gaps. In the perilous district of Ramundeboda none dared to go without armor, and the monk who came out had an iron shirt under his cloak.

"I recognize you from the sad day at Örebro, when you brought me the tidings of my father's death," said Lord Sten with a weak voice in greeting him. "You had no faith in the young and would not follow me."

"Young Lord Sten, you have gradually given me a different faith," replied the monk, sitting down beside him on the sledge with a box which diffused a strong scent of herbs. "We hermits understand the art of making medicines of plants while we pray. I will now follow you and fight

Young Lord Sten

with death for your life, as a page fights for his lord in a hand-to-hand struggle."

The sledge went swiftly on. Despite the suffering, Lord Sten never a moment forgot his duty. Wherever he halted he gave out orders for the defense of the realm, though horsemen continually arrived with worse and worse tidings. At Strängnäs he held a long consultation with his chancellor, the peaceable Bishop Mats, but the monk, who diligently tended the wound, observed that it began to enflame.

"One day more and I shall be in Stockholm," whispered Lord Sten as he was lifted on the sledge next morning. The driver swung the reins to speed the horses, and lopped branches indicated the road across the snowy bay of Björk. The fisherman sat by the ice-hole, the wood-cutter went along the shore with his axe, and no one divined what was passing in the sledge that dashed forward on the ice beyond. But the monk who knelt in the straw before the wounded regent with a hand on his breast, felt that his heart ceased to beat.

It was late when Stockholm opened her gates, and the sledge swung into the castle courtyard. "Have you a sick old man with you there, monk? What do you want with him here?" inquired the wardens as they ran up.

Swedish Chieftains

"In council he was prudent as a wise and seasoned man," the monk replied to the dismayed men, and put his arms about Lord Sten to lift him from the straw. "I hold on my bosom here the best of Swedes. Do you know now who it is? Help me to carry him up to his widow! Keep the doors barred and let Dame Christina have her cry in peace to-night. It will then be found what she has learned of the Stures."

The citizens thronged the taverns all evening, asking one another, "Who will be the man to come forward now? Lord Sten's son is but a child of six." Next morning, however, they began to put on their hauberks, for Dame Christina was already standing amid the stone cannon by the tower gate. Though red-eyed after a sleepless night, she had a heartening word for everyone she met. Slender and erect, she went up on the city wall. She spoke with the carpenters, who sprang out, nimble and bare-footed, and cut the bridges so that no one any more could slip into the city. Armed ships were anchored between the islands, and she provided cannonballs of stone, iron, and lead.

One day she said, "Kalmar is defended by the widow Anna Eriksdotter. When the bravest men die, their widows must take up the battle. But

Young Lord Sten

what do I see yonder in the suburbs? Is it a forest of spears?

The castle provost replied, "Trolle has put on his bishop's cap again and gathered an army. This must be his envoy coming for a parley. What shall we answer him?"

"Go down," she said, "and answer them with arquebus and serpent till they turn back!"

When the folk out in the villages heard of her firmness and reflected that she was the widow of Sten Sture, club and poleaxe were lifted from their corners. As the regent's body was carried to Gråmunkeholm and the bells were ringing for his soul, the peasants' weapons were sharpened anew, those weapons whose edges had already been nicked so often. Without even now becoming weary, the farmers continued to speak of the freedom which often had seemed so near and had always been withdrawn.

Meanwhile the time was getting on toward spring, and the ice began to break. Christian the Tyrant sailed up the river to cut off Stockholm from the ocean side, and a besieging army stood in the suburbs of the city to north and south.

NOTE

Sten Sture the Younger, son of Svante Nilsson Sture, succeeded his father as regent of Sweden in 1512. He attempted to win

Swedish Chieftains

over Archbishop Trolle, the head of the Danish faction in Sweden, but was unsuccessful. He then besieged the archbishop's castle. In 1518 King Christian II came from Denmark to reassert the Danish sovereignty over Sweden, but was defeated by Sten Sture at Brännkyrka and had to return home. In 1520 the Danes again invaded Sweden, and Sten Sture was fatally wounded in a battle with them on the ice of Lake Åsunden. He died on the way to Stockholm. In spite of the heroic defense of Stockholm led by Sten Sture's widow, Christina Gyllenstierna, the country was now in the power of Christian "the Tyrant."

Stockholm's Blood-Bath

CHRISTIAN THE TYRANT'S CORONATION

IN A GABLE house on the great square of Stockholm lived a citizen named Klavus Boye. He was so tall and broad that his garments took four times as much cloth as was needed for an average man. That was expensive, but fortunately his wife was small in the same proportion. The children, taking after their mother, were also small. They looked like two rows of apple-cheeked dolls as they sat on his knees the morning of November fourth, 1520 A. D.

Above everything in the world Klavus loved his children and his wife, Metta. The little silver-haired old woman was always radiantly happy, but to-day she was even more so than usual. She went about strewing newly-cut juniper twigs over the inlaid floor and gave thanks that at last the city gates had been raised after the long siege. Hemming Gad and Bishop Mats of Strängnäs had served up so many stories about the clemency of Christian the Tyrant and of how he had distributed salt and herrings gratis to the peasants, that the Stockholmers had finally decided to capitulate. Dame Christina had then been forced to surrender the city in return for many handsome assurances and promises, and

Swedish Chieftains

now Christian was to be crowned with all pomp by Trolle in the Storkyrka.

"For my part let the great folk squabble as they please," said Klavus, "we'll go down among the people on the church steps and look at the ceremony. We need fear nothing, Metta dear, for I have never mixed in the nobles' feuds." With that he took along his four doll children, setting the two smallest on his shoulders. The others took hold of the ends of his cloak. In front of him tripped Mother Metta, chatting gaily with maternal pride.

The way from the castle to the church was canopied with red cloth. The last guests for the coronation had already gone through the tent-like corridor, and our worthy Klavus pressed forward to the church door. The deep voice of Christian the Tyrant could be heard even as far as the steps. With three fingers on a reliquary he swore an oath to rule the kingdom with Swedish-born men and to perform all his functions according to Swedish law. Trolle then gave him the holy wafer. But it was Danish lords who brought forward the crown, sceptre, apple, and sword. When he had been crowned, he sat himself on a chair and distributed accolades, but only to Danes. "Sweden has been won by the sword," cried a herald, "and therefore no Swedes can

Stockholm's Blood-Bath

participate in the honor of knighthood." Thereupon the king arose and propped his arms on the high altar. An emissary from his brother-in-law Emperor Charles V advanced and hung on his neck a ribbon with a golden fleece surrounded by radiating sunbeams. The order of the Golden Fleece was a new token of Christian's power, for with it he was received into the Burgundian Federation of Princes.

With an instinctive trembling all present seemed at that instant almost to behold the dreaded emperor, as, pale and with projecting chin, he was carried in his litter over mountain roads in the southland. His dominion was so wide that the sun never set on his possessions, for when it sank behind the western boundaries it burned in sunrise above the eastern.

Proud of having such a patron, Christian the Tyrant waved his silken glove to the citizens down by the door. Among such petty folk he got on best. With a broad smile in his reddish-brown beard he liked to sit down to their simple fare and drink of their beer. But to-day it was great men who surrounded him, and it was perhaps for that reason that his eyes grew so hard. And then who could tell whether, at this very moment amid the acclamations of the most eminent men, he did not think of Dyveke, his Little

Swedish Chieftains

Dove, who had had but a tavern-keeper's wife for mother? Aye, her he had cared for, as the common folk knew.

It was once at Bergen in Norway that he had met her at a dance, and afterwards she had gone with him to his Danish capital, where for her sake he had forgotten his own queen. But now she was dead, and from the moment when she died all the good in him had been frozen. Now it was old Sigbrit, her mother, who was wont to go with him and whisper in his ear that some of the mightiest of Denmark had given poison to Dyveke. Sigbrit had also a kinsman named Didrik Slagheck, who had formerly been a barber, and he was constantly near the king, inciting him with ill counsel to revenge and cruelty. That the nobles knew better than did the common folk.

Was the king thinking to-day of his poor Dyveke, or was he considering just how much it behooved him to keep his promise to the excommunicated Swedish heretics? As he stood there in the apse, he now and then turned from side to side. Was he counting in his thoughts how many of the heads around him would soon be severed out on the square? Or was he fighting a last fight against the better principles of his youth?

Stockholm's Blood-Bath

The hymn rose, and as he strode down to the door, he saluted the lowly folk with the same graciousness as the others.

All this while the autumn sunlight lay on the statue of St. George and shone on the sword which he raised above the dragon. Would there never again arise from the countryside a man strong enough to grasp the sword of vengeance and gather the peasants anew for victory and freedom?

IN STOCKHOLM CASTLE

For three days there were tournaments and banquets, and the citizens of Stockholm presented Christian the Tyrant with a gilded drinking-vessel and sixty Hungarian guldens. Archbishop Trolle, Didrik Slagheck, and the energetic bishop of Odense, Jöns Beldenack, however, had often secret consultations with the king during the festivities. On the third day, quite unexpectedly, a large number of bishops, nobles, citizens, and distinguished ladies were invited to the castle.

"Klavus, Klavus!" cried mother Metta, joyously whirling about the room. "What an honor! Here is a message that you are to go to the castle. Put on your new clothes so that you won't look any worse than those stuck-up Jutlanders."

It was indeed a costume fit to hold its own.

Swedish Chieftains

The cloth was gathered up into puffs at the shoulders and slashed here and there so that the brighter lining swelled through. The shoes were as broad at the toe as the muzzle of an ox, the cloak was lined with squirrel, and the cap edged with fur. Big the citizen had been before, but now he looked like a veritable giant. "Put a knot in your glove," enjoined his wife, "so that you'll remember to say when you come into the long, long hall: 'Peace be to this house, Your Grace, and all will turn out well; for we are all Christians' . . . How would that be?"

He wiped the perspiration from his brow. "'Peace to your lady, young Christian, eh?' . . . "No that would never do." Mother Metta grew serious but still could not suppress a slight feeling of pride, for it was surely a distinction to wear so much clothes. "You're the man to talk to great folk, aren't you?" she said. "Whatever you do, don't forget to stop eating the minute the king wipes his fingers!"

But at that Klavus was nearly cross. "Oh, that would be fine, wouldn't it," he muttered, "if the king should see I set no more worth on his good cheer? No, thank you! I'll always do honor to the food, even if His Grace has to wait a while." Klavus measured the floor with long strides, and the children stood around in a ring

Stockholm's Blood-Bath

admiring him. Heated by his exertions, he kissed them on the cheek and stroked his wife's hair. "The saints be with you, beloved," he said, mollified, pulling on and stretching his gloves. "Have everything ready for when I come back. Mother, 'twould be well if you had a little Rhenish in the jug about curfew time."

When he went out, his acquaintances saluted him with a deeper bend of the knee than usual. He felt wholly satisfied with himself as he set his best foot foremost.

But praise not the day before you have said goodnight! When Klavus found himself at last in the splendid hall of the castle, he felt most at ease when he had stolen off behind the backs into the window corner.

The king entered and seated himself under the canopy, and when all were assembled, the doors were closed. Dry and lean, Trolle took his place before the throne and demanded an investigation and judgment upon all connected with his deposition and the destruction of his castle. This at last was his day of victory. Shame and defeat still enflamed his haughty soul. With outward composure above his cold hate he read the pope's bull of excommunication against the Swedish lords.

Dame Christina Gyllenstierna answered by fear-

Swedish Chieftains

lessly showing the decree against Trolle signed by the national assembly. Bishop Brask now hastened to tear off his seal and to the surprise of all unfolded the little slip of paper on which stood written: "To this act I am forced and constrained."

Many hands were clenched indignantly under cloaks, for it was easy to see that by this artifice the crafty bishop would be let off. Meanwhile there was a long hearing, and when the king finally left the hall it was already so late that candles had to be lighted. Klavus and the other citizens had hardly dared to answer to the questions otherwise than by an indistinct mumbling. But in the silence of his heart he spoke all the more downrightly. "Old Klavus," he said to himself, "never did you imagine you had offended anybody. You came here with good will toward all, even the Swedish faction, though you have some drops of foreign blood in your body. Is it for that you are to be punished? King Christian, you teach us something. When injustice comes into power, he who would do right falls on bitter days."

He felt strong soldiers' hands seize him by the arms and pull him along through a tumult. Sören Norby and other Danes who had just received the accolade at the coronation had rushed

Stockholm's Blood-Bath

in with the guard and begun to carry off those accused amid torches and drawn swords. Speechless with consternation, the prisoners went along the narrow stairs to the tower. There they were dragged into a dungeon. Thieves and murderers who had paced its floors in their chains during past generations had carved clumsy marks and symbols in the masonry. Against the same wall now leaned the dignified Dame Cecilia av Eka, Gustaf Vasa's mother, with men and women of the Lejonhuvud, Kurck, Banér, Gyllenstierna, Brahe, and other famous families of the nobility. Some of the men kept up a defiant mood, and Lord Erik Johansson, father of Gustaf Vasa, repaid the guards with jests and biting Vasa words.

Soon there was no more room, and other vaults and halls were barred off as prisons. The bishops and other clerics were shut into a narrow room, where they had to lie on the floor as best they might.

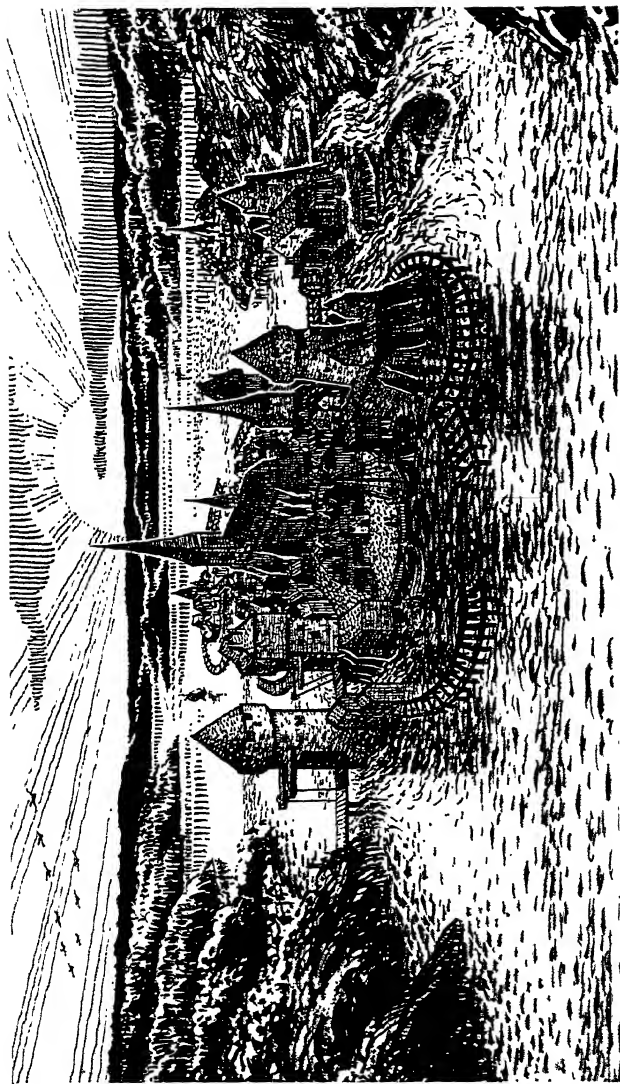
The soldiers had most trouble with Klavus, whose blazing wrath seemed to make him bigger than ever. It was impossible to get his giant body through the tower doors. No matter how they thumped and shoved, they could not push him in. For a time they put him to one side. Cautiously he retreated further and further back. Gradually he was concealed entirely by the pale

Swedish Chieftains

faces that went past, and the torchlight no longer reached him. As he groped about, he came upon a dilapidated stairway, without knowing where it led. Though the stones were loose, he climbed up it step by step.

When the stairs ended, he realized that he had got into one of the castle garrets. Through chinks in the gable the stars blinked down, and from the blacksmiths' court came a sound that lured his thoughts away to the warm summer nights when the crickets sit in the grass rubbing their wings together. This grinding sound came from a troop of red-clad executioners, who were sharpening their swords in the light of a torch.

There was a creaking under his feet, and he stood still in the dark. Between the thin planks of the floor he could look down into a room where the king sat at a table. There was a legend that he had held his hand tight clenched and filled with blood when he was born. Now too it rested clenched on the cloth, but he was talking about business contracts and shrewd plans for the future, now and again spicing his words with a good-humored sally. Afterwards he became thoughtful and gloomy. With eyes closed he pressed his beard far down into his black cloak and whispered something about his royal oath at the coronation.



Drawing by Arthur Sjögren

STOCKHOLM IN THE BEGINNING OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

1

1

Stockholm's Blood-Bath

Didrik Slagheck bent above him, lithe and insidious, his elbows at his side and his hands open. "It will never be quiet here before Your Grace puts an end to the Swedish nobles and their dissensions," he remarked softly and easily. "For your own part Your Grace could magnanimously promise them pardon, but not on behalf of the church and the pope."

"They are heretics and must as heretics be condemned," concluded Trolle, who came in at the door. To touch the king he fell three times on his knees.

Behind him his pages waited at the threshold. Chilled with horror, Klavus stared from his retreat at Trolle's crest, which was sewn in gold and colors on their garments. Within a shield stood a troll beheaded, from whose trunk the blood was spouting.

THE BLOOD-BATH

Thursday the eighth of November dawned wintry and sullen. Very early, while the piper was going about on the city wall lustily playing the reveille, it was proclaimed with clang of trumpet that no citizen might leave his house before the next trumpet call. The city gates were kept shut so that no one could get out either by bullying or fair words.

With tear-stained eyes Mother Metta waited

Swedish Chieftains

at her window on the great square without comprehending what had happened. The jug of Rhenish had been ready and waiting since the evening before, but no Klavus had come.

Just before mid-day the second trumpet call was sounded. In the middle of the square the soldiers were drawn up in a cordon with their spears, and it was hard to see what was going on. Mother Metta wondered whether she had lost her senses. Between two rows of soldiers were led forth bishops and lords whom she recognized only too well, though they were bowed and pale. Only Lord Erik Johansson Vasa had his usual color. An esquire sprang forward and whispered something to him, perhaps that he might be given his pardon, for Lord Erik answered in a clear, high voice, "My brother companions are honorable men, and in God's name I will die with them." His son-in-law, Joakim Brahe, followed him, alike undaunted, and sang a hymn of consolation. Councillors Anders Karlson and Anders Ruth warned the Swedes to let themselves no longer be betrayed by false oaths but to rise and avenge this fearful act of violence. Their voices were drowned by the clamor of the soldiers' weapons. The band of the condemned was so long that the last had not yet left the castle gate.

Stockholm's Blood-Bath

Mother Metta pulled her children from the window and held her hands over her own eyes, but with that she thought of her beloved husband. Once again her glance began to seek him among the psalm-singing prisoners who walked with folded hands. She saw how they took off their rings and gold chains and stretched out their heads under the sword. The first who knelt was the white-haired Bishop Mats of Strängnäs. The fifth was Lord Erik, who kept to the last his indomitable Vasa courage. When the dusk fell at last, a heavy rain set in, and more than eighty beheaded bodies lay in the square.

Mother Metta lighted a small taper and stayed awake all night praying to the saints. Not even during the next two days could she get speech with any one. The gate had to be kept shut, for troops of soldiers went around plundering, and the executions continued.

Forgetful of cold and hunger, Klavus meanwhile remained hidden in the castle garret. When he was finally discovered under some old sacks, the tribunal was weary of murder, and he was let go. Blood-colored rain water trickled down the sloping streets from the great square. As if to persuade himself that he knew nothing, he asked if the Danes had broken the great wine vat under the council hall. But the people an-

Swedish Chieftains

swered that that was the noblest blood of Sweden now running down the streets. Then the lock on his lips was broken, and he related how he had heard the king order that the chief women prisoners should be carried off and immured in the Blue Tower at Copenhagen.

He pounded at the door of his house and shouted his name. Mother Metta came running and threw her arms about his neck, but though she had him with her again, none of them could feel glad. Memories pursued them no matter what they tried to speak of. He could not prattle with his little ones as before, or sit by the stove corner contented and thankful for his beloved home. Instead he would stand long in front of a hauberk and an ancient morion which hung rusty on a post, and which in former days had been worn by his father. Klavus was a mild-tempered man, but where injustice ruled there could be no peace. He pressed Metta's hands and vowed to go into the strife, if only a man came forward who could marshall the Swedes.

Out on the square dogs fought for the half-naked bodies. The heads were spiked on poles. Only Bishop Mats was given the honor of having his head between his feet. The forest of the realm's nobility lay felled there under the axe. These were the men who had ruled and governed,

Stockholm's Blood-Bath

whose fathers had fought among the knightly squadrons around Karl Knutsson and Magnus Lock-the-barn.

Next morning bodies and heads were gathered up in barrels, which were placed on runners and dragged away by horses. The bodies of Lord Sten and a little son of his who had died in the siege were taken from their graves on Gråmunkeholm and thrown with the other corpses on a pyre above Södermalm. It was not fitting that heretics should have an honorable burial, said Trolle. The people stood on bridges and shores and watched as the clouds of smoke rolled up. Mirrored in the water, it flamed on long into the night, this heretics' pyre unexampled in the Northland, a pyre wherein ancient discord was consumed together with much that was noble and dear. Yet for this very reason from its light over bay and hill a new day was finally to dawn.

NOTE

In 1520 Stockholm had to surrender to Christian II, called "the Tyrant," who was proclaimed king. In November of the same year he instituted the terrible massacre of Swedish noblemen known in history as the Stockholm Blood-bath, and this was followed by executions throughout the country. Apparently Sweden was prostrate under the feet of the tyrant, but ninety years of revolts had educated the Swedes. They had learned to fight and had become more and more determined to drive out the oppressor. The cruelty of the king roused them to a final effort.

Gustaf Vasa

HOW THE DALECARLIANS REPENTED

THE WINTER snow was spread over Dalecarlia, and the folk in the farmsteads made good use of the short days, when for a few hours only the sun glided low along the wooded ridges. The old people had now better leisure than in summer to weave or spin or carpenter by the firelight, and the young ones gathered in the barns to thresh, for it was still too early to fetch wood from the forest.

On the estate of Rankhyttan the threshing was in full swing. One day a young fellow came with an axe over his shoulder and took service with the other laborers. In the evening when the work was over they all used to sit in a ring and eat out of the same porridge bowl and then lie down to sleep on the straw wherever they could. The new man did just as the others, but they noted that he was unaccustomed to the work, and once when he was swinging the flail one of the maids observed that a gold-embroidered silken collar stuck out from under his simple homespun. She went in and told what she had seen to her master, who was called Anders Persson and was highly respected in the mining region.

Next morning the new man was summoned into

Gustaf Vasa

the house. He stood in the doorway with his long hanging peasant's hair and fingered his hat. The thick-set and well-shaven miner showed an expression of surprise as he surveyed him. "Life is strange," he remarked, looking the other full in the eyes. "Some years ago when I was studying at Upsala, I sometimes used to meet a young esquire of the Vasa family. His name was Gustaf Eriksson."

The man turned the hat between his fingers, but Anders Persson, excited by the thoughts of old times, continued: "I can still remember how strong and confident the lad stood in his fiery red garments showering the rest of us with snowballs. He sat under a Danish master, but do you know what he said to him? This is what he said: 'When I'm big I'll go up to Dalecarlia, stir up the Dal men, and smash the Danes on the nose.'"

"No, did he say that?" responded the man. "That would make the master hot in his Danish heart."

"The master grabbed him and gave him a birching," continued the miner, pacing the floor. "But the young gentleman struck his dagger through the school-book and shouted, 'You and your school can go to the devil!' With that he went off and never came back."

"If you know so much, master," the servant

Swedish Chieftains

replied with deep seriousness, "then perhaps you know besides where he is now."

"I think he stands right before me in this house," exclaimed the miner, coming to a halt. "How old are you?"

"Three and twenty years last Ascension Day I was born on the estate of Lindholm to this life of slavery," answered the stranger. But with that the tears burst from his eyes, and his hand met that of his former friend in a warm grasp. "Yes, I am Gustaf Eriksson," he rather whispered than said. "My father fell at Stockholm before the headsman's sword. My mother is pining to death in captivity. I myself in a shepherd's dirty clouts escaped from prison in Denmark and only in Lübeck obtained shelter and decent attire. Help me, brother, to raise the Dal men and free our country!"

Anders Persson dropped his hand with an embarrassed and pre-occupied air. "You used always to make us merry with your lively talk," he said. "But it's all over with joy and peace for the whole of us. You are an outlawed fugitive. If you stay here, you will endanger me and all my house. Go on up to the higher parishes, go on along the rivers, through the great woods! Never stop long in any one place! Here in the mining region the folk are more quiet. If no one

Gustaf Vasa

else will hear you, speak to the proud Mora men. That advice is all I can give you."

Disheartened, Gustaf Vasa once more shouldered his axe and continued his lonely wandering.

On the estate of Ornäs next day he happened on another old acquaintance. This was the freeholder Arent Persson. Arent opened his great fur coat and broad bosom and promised to go at once to the neighbors and find out whether they cared to pack up their barrels of arrows and start an insurrection. Ornäs mansion was large and handsome, and when Gustaf Vasa had been suitably entertained at the board of its lady, the stately Barbro Stigsdotter, Arent took a candle from the table and lighted him cordially to a sleeping place in the loft. Here there were both pillow and warm snow-white sheepskin robes to creep under. Wearied, but content with finding at last a reliable friend, Gustaf Vasa threw himself on the bed and slept more securely than for a long while.

Towards daybreak he was roused by a soft hand laid on his shoulder. When he opened his eyes, he saw Barbro standing bent over the pillow. The heart of a homeless fugitive might have rejoiced to behold her youthful countenance the first thing on a sharp winter morning, but it was pale and terrified. "You must know, my good sir, to

Swedish Chieftains

what folk you have come," she whispered, holding her breath to hear what was going on in the road beneath. "Can you hear the bells down there? That is Arent, who has been consulting with the neighbors, and now he is driving past without coming in. He is taking the straight road to the Danish provost, who is a relation of ours. But I can not bear it on my conscience that such a young and noble lord as you should be put in irons by the provost and sent to King Christian. Up from your covers, if you value your life! I have told the groom to wait with a sledge by the porch."

She snatched down one of the long and narrow strips of cloth which were thrown over the beams as an ornament. "Drive to John the priest at Svärdsjö!" she advised, pushing the half-dazed guest before her to a little projecting room beside the porch. It was nine yards to the ground, but Barbro Stigsdotter had strong arms. If they had been weak, nobody knows how things would have looked in our land to-day. She quickly wound the strip about Gustaf Vasa's breast and lowered him carefully down to the sledge. This was done not a moment too soon, for on the other side she could already see the provost's horsemen coming to take him by the throat.

Gustaf Vasa knew this time that he would be

Gustaf Vasa

pursued, and the sledge went rushing along over the frozen Lake Runn. When he got to Svärdsjö, he went about threshing with the servants for the first few days, before he ventured to tell the priest who he was. The priest, who thereupon recognized him from old school-days at Upsala, tried in his poverty to show him what small honors he could, standing respectfully by and holding the towel when he washed. But this was noticed by his inquisitive maid-servant, and Gustaf Vasa went off to seek a new hiding place some distance off with the royal archer Sven Alvsson at Isala.

There was a warm breath from the open door, for outside it was biting winter, but within the stove was roaring, and Sven Alvsson's wife was in the midst of her big baking. Gustaf Vasa placed himself beside her to warm his hands, but they had not had long to converse before a spy stuck in his head. Behind him a group of his men appeared in the doorway, and as they stood there resting on their spears, they began to talk to the mistress. They told her that a great price had been set on Lord Gustaf's head and wondered where the wretch might be hiding.

Was it then all over with his boyhood and youthful dreams of freeing his oppressed and unhappy fatherland? Alone and weaponless, he

Swedish Chieftains

stood silent with his hands outstretched over the stove. But Sven Alvsson's wife, who had just learned who he was, was not inferior to Barbro Stigsdotter, but kept her presence of mind in time of need. "What are you about blinking and staring at strangers as if you had never seen folk before?" she called to him as to a stupid peasant, and gave him a slap across the back with the dough spade. "Pack yourself off to the barn and thresh!"

The spies laughed at him as he lolloped out to the barn, dragging his feet after him. Insolent and fierce, they stamped off through the snow in all directions to search in other houses, for that so distinguished a man as Lord Gustaf should be so treated with a dough spade was something they could not imagine. As soon as they were gone, Sven Alvsson hid his guest in a truss of straw and drove him up into the woods.

The road curved long and desolate among the lofty firs, and Gustaf Vasa lay for hours listening to the soft and sleepy crunch of the runners. It was well he was concealed, for suddenly the sledge came to a halt, surrounded by spies. He heard how they inquired for him and stuck their spears suspiciously several times through the straw. He felt a tear in his leg and realized that he had been wounded and had begun to bleed.

Gustaf Vasa

But he bit his lips together and lay motionless. After a while he gathered that the spies had ridden on without noticing anything, for the runners began to creak again.

Sven Alvsson meantime happened to turn around on the load and see that blood was dripping on the snow from the straw. Without hesitation he hopped down, drew his knife and cut the horse's foot, so that no one should wonder about the blood tracks.

Only when he had got up to the outlying districts did he roll away the straw so that the fugitive could get up and continue his journey toward fresh adventures. Here Gustaf Vasa encountered a tall and manly race, who were honest and contented as well, and their old-fashioned dialect had a fine hearty ring. One day in Yuletide he mounted a small hillock in Mora to speak, for it was just the time when the congregation came back from church.

Now at last he stood eye to eye with the inflexible men of Mora, and they gathered around him in a close ring. Many had their weapons with them, the bows and spear-shafts cut with ancient runes. Frozen and snow-covered, Lake Siljan lay like a wide plain surrounded by bluish mountain ridges, and a fresh north wind carried his words out over the throng. "How long shall

Swedish Chieftains

we be slaves, we who are born to freedom?" he cried, his cheeks quivering with emotion. "The old among you can still remember what Swedish men have had to endure under the foreign kings. The young hear the tales of it and learn from childhood to hate such a government. Soon there will be nothing left us but empty houses, lean fields, and insecure lives. I myself have just lost both father and kinsfolk. Dal men, ye who have ever been fearless and undaunted, all the people of Sweden are now turning their eyes toward you. With the help of God I stand ready to be your chief and lead you against the tyrants."

The Mora men listened well, but when they began to consult among one another, they became doubtful. "What do we know of you, young sir?" they said. "Betake yourself off wherever you may! If King Christian is harsh with the high folk, that is his affair. We have promised him our faith and would live at peace."

His countenance aflame with mortification and resentment, Gustaf Vasa marked that all which his grief and youthful enthusiasm had brought to utterance was spoken to deaf ears. Hopeless and despairing, he went his way. Some two miles from Mora he stayed several days concealed under Morkarleby Bridge. He then fastened on his skis and sped away between the snow-burdened

Gustaf Vasa

branches, away over the endless mountain tracts, where the vast, star-glittering winter night weighs upon the soul so that the heart stands still and the lonely mortal feels himself abandoned by the whole world. At times he sought a little rest in some empty dairy house, where he sat chilled and starving but with no craving for what food he might be able to get from strangers' hands in a strangers' land. But at last he turned down with his skis along the slopes to the Western Dal River, which mostly ran deep and clear, but was now frozen over. On the sides of the river were small cultivated patches, but the valley grew ever narrower, and the bluffs came nearer together with the clasp of the wilderness. The nocturnal silence was broken only by the piercing wail of some hungry fox or the whining sound of the ice as the river froze harder. It was now the coldest time of winter, and the wanderer had reached the last settlement below the Norwegian boundary.

Next morning when he stepped out of his night quarters to slip into the woods, he caught sight of two men on skis who followed his tracks and gesticulated to him eagerly. "Stop, noble Lord Gustaf!" they cried in their good Dalecarlian brogue; "we have been sent from Mora."

Weary and spiritless, he leaned on his stick

Swedish Chieftains

and looked at them with threatening eyes. But they took breath and continued joyously, "The Mora men have berued themselves, you may well believe, and now they are arming. You have learned the craft of war under the departed Lord Sten. Come and be our leader! Sixteen young men, take it on our word, shall you have as body guard."

With that a deep sigh of relief rose from his breast, for he felt that they were in earnest. Shorter too seemed the way back, on which he had come with such heavy sorrows to bear.

When the peasant army assembled, the marching songs rang through the woods, and the Dalecarlians went off with bow on shoulder to set their chieftain in the high seat of Sweden.

At the ferry of Brunnbäck, the gate and bridge of Dalecarlia, there was a rain of arrows and hand-to-hand fighting, and in Västerås, which the fleeing Danes had fired, sparks whirled over the roofs. Here the laggards thought they might play and sing a while. They therefore went down into the cellars and provided themselves with casks of beer, rolling a great wine barrel into the very town-hall. Around this they sat down with legs crossed like tailors and thought to let the glasses foam to heart's content. But at that instant Gustaf Vasa came with his sword like the



Drawing by E. Berggren

GUSTAF VASA, THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY

Gustaf Vasa

wrathful Thor with his hammer. He knew the Danes were on the watch for a surprise and therefore went about smashing beer casks and wine barrels so that his men should not drink themselves tipsy. "It is better," he said, "that beer and wine should run on the streets than many a worthy man's blood."

Every day new bands of the folk joined the advancing troops, and a teeming horde of bows, spears, and round peasant hats spread all over the heights around Stockholm.

Gustaf Vasa was now elected regent, but the weapons of the Danes still gleamed on the city walls, and after a long time the common folk simply went home to look after field and pasture. The cause often looked desperate, and the exchequer was empty, but by good fortune the enemy got into war with the people of Lübeck. From them Gustaf Vasa hired soldiers and bought vessels equipped for war, so that he could surround the city completely, and in the expectation of victory he was jubilantly hailed as king.

THE ENTRY INTO STOCKHOLM

Under the elms below the ridge of Brunkeberg looked out the cloister of St. Klara. One day a rider halted in the courtyard there and advanced to meet the strict abbess, Anna Reinholdsdotter.

Swedish Chieftains

She was tall and lean, and a cross of gold shone against her dark robe.

"Twenty-six and already king after having tramped in the woods a little while ago without a roof over his head! That is fast going for Lord Gustaf Eriksson!" he exclaimed, throwing his glove across the stone table. "I should have thought that I myself or one of my friends might rather have deserved such an honor."

The white stubble stood straight out from his powerful chin, and as he spoke he let his other glove fly the same way as the first.

"Lord Ture Jönsson," replied the abbess, courteously picking up the gloves and handing them to him, for he was a nobleman of high repute, "let us hope that our wily Bishop Brask may yet pepper his milk, if needful." She laid her thin, transparent hand on his arm, and he humbly kissed it.

"Yes, we must keep up our hopes, we who do not thrive in the new order of things," he muttered. Therewith he threw himself once more on his horse as nimbly as a youth and galloped off in a cloud of dust.

With trembling in their hearts, the nuns, who favored the Danish party, went up and sat at their loopholes to count in alarm the thinning garrison on the besieged walls of Stockholm.

Gustaf Vasa

Summer was come. The heavy, creaking city gates were at last opened, and on Midsummer Eve the southern bridge shook under the entering army of the king. The streets were cramped between the red-tiled houses, at the corners of which small lamps were burning under images of the saints. Many of the wooden houses had been broken up for fuel. Nearly starved, the Swedish townsfolk hurried forward to meet their rescuers and welcome old friends of their youth. Thousands of hands were stretched toward the king, as with glowing cheeks and yellow beard he rode forward on his richly-caparisoned charger. His keen and spirited eyes recognized the house and inn where he had lived before as a simple esquire. There on the great square his father had been led to execution, and in the high tower of the castle, called the Tower of the Three Crowns, his noble mother had sighed among the captives before she was carried away to hunger and death. By the strangest ways he had risen to be the avenger and saviour of his people, and now the peaceful midsummer sun gleamed upon the crowns on the tower. On such a day of rejoicing no one wished to think of past tears, and Gustaf Vasa knelt before the high altar in the Storkyrka. Outside, his Dalecarlians embraced one another, merry at heart, blustering of speech, proud of

Swedish Chieftains

having given Sweden a chieftain whom we shall never cease to thank as long as our language is spoken amid our lakes and woods.

Up in the castle apartments, on the other hand, all was empty and desolate, for Archbishop Trolle and the Danish nobles had long since fled to Christian the Tyrant in Copenhagen.

Surrounded by revolution, King Christian finally had to pack his valuables in baskets and chests and go off in his ships to seek an asylum in Holland, a dependency of his imperial brother-in-law. When the royal ship was under way, the lid of a chest was cautiously opened from within by the lean and waxen hand of a woman, and the fold of a black satin sleeve fell over the edge. From the chest arose old Sigbrit, Dyveke's mother, the faithful councillor in all his vicissitudes, who had been carried aboard in the chest so that the infuriated populace might not seize her. The ship put out to sea, and she took her stand by the king to console him as, broken and overcome with weeping, he stood bowed over the rail and looked back at the shores of his lost kingdoms.

THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY

The years went by. Gustaf Vasa grew old, and his beard became long and ice-gray. Wise and venerable, though with roses still in his cheeks

Gustaf Vasa

and the same vehement temper, he journeyed through the country districts. If the peasants were thwart and refractory when he spoke to them, he made his horse prance and shook his naked sword at them. Then they knelt and made good promises. But if they came in the right spirit, he listened graciously and attentively to their difficulties and advised them how to sow and reap and make their nets. Hostile bands no longer burned their crops, and their cattle roamed safely between lakes and wooded mountains. Thanks and blessings flew to meet him from well-ploughed fields and warm cottages, where the elders no longer needed to think of their age with grief. Paths beneath birches and pines no longer led to secret lairs in the wilderness but to eel-hatches and windmills, to smithies by the streamside, smoking charcoal furnaces and smelting-houses.

The old feuds were forgotten. When a peasant swung a brace of wood-fowl over his shoulder, he often directed his steps to the royal castle. "This bag King Gustaf shall have as a present for his table," he thought. Or four men would trudge up with a bear or a moose and vanish with them into the castle kitchen. If an old man lay in his peasant hut infirm and dying, when he was to set his mark to his will, he would say, "The

Swedish Chieftains

tenth of my silver got with sweat and saved with care shall go to our beloved King Gustaf." The peasants' silver was then stored in the Eskil Room with all the melted treasure from churches and monasteries. The Eskil Room consisted of four vaults, each over four yards long and four wide, all of which were so stuffed with silver ingots that the door could hardly be closed. It delighted the old king to stand there and have the metal counted and weighed, for he was a mighty merchant. But he had never thrown away money on any useless war excursions to dazzle foreigners and was too shrewd to listen to the enticing words of other princes. The art of buying and selling was what he wished to teach the Swedes, who were inert and narrow-minded when they ought to have been putting out in their sloops with their copper and iron, or their pike, salmon, and butter casks. High-masted merchantmen, which sailed as far as Lisbon; clattering bars of iron in the weighing-house on Iron Square; skilled foreign masters and prentices seated in the taverns singing, with spring flowers in their German wine—that was what ambassadors and travelers might see in the wheat-rustling realm of Gustaf Vasa.

Weighted with all these cares, Gustaf Vasa finally realized that his years were numbered. When the window nook swam with moonlight so

Gustaf Vasa

that his luxuriant beard became white as snow, he took a lute on his knee to win comfort from its delicate tones. But for a long time he would forget to play on its strings and would sit bowed and melancholy, aged before his time. In the churchyard beyond the castle moat the half-blind sexton Brynolf with his lantern was at his task of gravedigging. The armorer and the tailor sometimes lost their customers, but the gravedigger was never out of work. The king's eyes used to follow the tiny flame of the lantern as the man went into the church and laid aside his tools. When the glimmer passed in front of the pulpit with its famous basket, he knew that there lay an unpretentious slab, on whose inscription many years had scattered their dust and sand. Under that stone rested Master Olov, the priest who had brought to Sweden the Lutheran Reformation. And when the lantern went up into the choir, he knew that there stood the caskets of two queens, for he had been twice a widower.

The young Queen Katarina, who now nestled quietly down beside him on the cushions in the moonlight, looked more like his daughter than his consort. "Give the lute to my sons," he said to her one evening, sighing deep and long. "My fingers have grown stiff, and I am a weary and ex-

Swedish Chieftains

hausted man who longs to be out of this world of care."

Leaning on his sons, he went once more down into the parliament room and mounted the throne. "Dear, good men of Sweden," he said to the assembled Estates, "you may see that I stand in a royal palace. But we should not forget that forty years ago such a thing seemed impossible to all men's eyes, when I wandered in the recesses of the forest, dressed in homespun, drank water, and ate the most wretched fare. God, who exalted the frail stripling David to royal rank and honor, has also assisted me, unworthy as I am. Let Him be my witness that, if I have failed in my governance, it has been from human weakness and because I was not able to do better. My time will soon be over. To know that I need neither stars nor any other sort of divination. I feel in my own body the signs that I shall soon go hence." He raised his trembling hands in benediction above friends, opponents, and the entire Swedish people, whom he had raised out of thralldom and misery. Yet again as his figure, still regal though bowed with infirmity, passed slowly and wearily out through the door, he turned his head from time to time toward the sobbing assembly and nodded his farewell.

Sated with living, he lay down on his death-

Gustaf Vasa

bed, and when his young wife could no longer keep watch by his bedside, she had her couch set so that her eyes were always upon him.

When the great Gustaf Vasa had passed away, his grave was prepared in Upsala Cathedral, that famous sanctuary where St. Birgitta's ancestors have their monument and St. Erik's bones still lie in their shrine. Provided with landed property, goods and gold, his four sons followed him in the funeral train. There walked Charles, a little fellow of nine, and Magnus frail and teary-eyed. Thoughtful came the learned Johan with his red hair; and Erik, the eldest, slender and knightly with pearl rings on his fingers. When the coffin had been carried down into the interment vault, Svante Sture struck three times on the stone floor with the king's sword, calling each time, "Now is King Gustaf dead!" While drums and trumpets shook roof and tomb, he handed the sword to the Fourteenth Erik, who therewith received the great inheritance from his own and Sweden's father.

NOTE

The work of liberation begun by Engelbrekt and continued by the Stures was completed by the young Swedish nobleman, Gustaf Eriksson Vasa. He was chosen king and made his entry into Stockholm on Mid-summer Day, 1523. Gustaf

Swedish Chieftains

Vasa not only freed his country from foreign oppression, but he "built Sweden from floor to roof-tree." He introduced the Lutheran Reformation, which was officially established by the Riksdag at Västerås in 1527, and reduced the power of the Church by confiscating its lands and laying them under the Crown. The king was to be the head of the Church instead of the pope. He also strengthened the royal power by making Sweden an hereditary monarchy, so that the king should no longer be dependent upon the great lords for his election. The common people felt that he was their protector against the tyranny of ecclesiastics and noblemen and loved him greatly. Gustaf Vasa died in 1560. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Erik.

Erik XIV was a handsome and gifted man whose love marriage with the peasant girl Karin Månsdotter has cast a romantic halo over his life. He was, however, cruel, treacherous, and licentious and was subject to violent fits of insanity. He imprisoned his brother Johan and with his own hand murdered Nils Sture whom he suspected of intriguing against him. Finally the people deposed him and made his brother Johan king, 1568. Erik was in his turn imprisoned and died after eight years. It is supposed that he was poisoned by his brother King Johan.

Johan III had artistic tastes and enriched Sweden with works of art. His love of beauty and pomp led him to favor the Catholic form of church service, and he was further influenced by his wife, the Catholic princess, Katarina Jagellonica of Poland. He dreamed of reconciling the two churches, retaining many of the features of the Catholic service.

The Catholic influence was strengthened when Johan III died and his son, Sigismund, who was also king of Poland and educated in the Catholic faith, became king, in 1592. But the Swedes had no mind to give up the Lutheran religion, and they turned to Gustaf Vasa's youngest son, Charles, whom they chose as their leader. Charles defeated Sigismund in 1598, and the following year he was deposed. Charles then became

Gustaf Vasa

regent, and some years later began to assume the name of king.

Charles IX was the only one of Gustaf Vasa's sons who inherited the great qualities of his father, and he devoted himself to defending his father's lifework. He again curbed the great lords who had taken advantage of Johan's weakness to resume altogether too great power. Like his father he depended chiefly on the peasants for support, so that he was called "the peasant king." He established the Lutheran church by driving out Sigismund, and when the Polish king threatened to resume his rule over Sweden, carried the war to the continent. He took the aggressive in a war against Russia, which had been guilty of treachery, and Swedish troops penetrated as far as Moscow. Finally, in his old age, he fought desperately against the Danes who, under their great king, Christian IV, for the last time in history invaded Sweden. This is known as the Kalmar war. Worn out by the strain, Charles IX died in the middle of the war, in 1611.

Charles' son was the great Gustavus Adolphus. The young prince was only seventeen years old when upon his father's death he had to carry on the desperate war against the invaders. By the peace of 1613 Sweden's independence was finally established, but the Swedes had to agree to pay the enormous sum of one million rix-dollars.

Days of Victory

THE PROTESTANTS TAKE ARMS

BETWEEN the orchards and mountains of Bohemia lay the proud city of Prague with many-towered walls. Bohemia was counted as a dependency of the Holy Roman Empire, but among the treasures of the castle on the citadel hill of Prague was still preserved the ancient crown of the realm.

The rounded mountains were clad with vineyards and contained iron and silver in their depths. The people had a strong spirit of independence. Though the streets of Prague wound about after the manner of the Middle Ages, and the bridge was bordered with the statues of old saints, fresh winds blew through the minds of the citizens, and there were many Protestants among them.

One May day in 1618 the Protestants assembled in wrathful, insurrectionary mood, for the Catholic emperor had closed several of their churches. "We are free men and our faith is free!" rang from the band who amid turmoil and shouting went up to the castle. They were warriors as well as merchants, and all carried weapons. The dignified nobles in black hose who led the way proceeded into the hall to the imperial

Days of Victory

viceroys, followed by as many of the others as could squeeze in. Their temper rose as the debate grew more violent. Without wasting many words they seized two of the terrified councillors and a secretary by the hands and feet and threw them all three out of the window from the third story. They whirled about in the air with legs a-sprawl to the castle moat twenty-eight yards below. "That's justice according to old Bohemian custom!" shouted the Protestants as they stuck out their heads to see how the flight would end. But the councillors, who had chanced to fall on a big rubbish heap, were soon on their feet again, running off as best they could. The Protestants sent some shots after them but only struck their cloaks, and the fugitives went without delay to the emperor to tell about their bruises.

Deep within his great fortress at Vienna sat the Emperor Matthias, sick and aged with a rosary on his knees, notorious for his sluggishness. But when he had closed his weary eyes, his kinsman Ferdinand was chosen emperor over the Confederation of German Princes. He had vowed before the altar of the Holy Virgin to restore the power of the Catholic Church. Vigorous and astute, surrounded by monks and priests, he was a man to keep his word. He not only felt himself to be the guardian of Europe against

Swedish Chieftains

the followers of Mahomet under the Turkish banners, but it was his dream that the authority over Christendom should be divided between him and the pope. A storm began to brew over all his mighty realm, for many of the minor princes and their subjects had long since become Protestants. Before, it had been the pope who determined all spiritual questions, but this could no longer satisfy men's belief, as it hindered them in their right to think and investigate freely. Secular people began to rise more and more against the old church.

In the Northland, too, the thunders of war began to mutter. Gustavus Adolphus, the youthful king of the Swedes, burned with longing for noble exploits. He was already developing a new art of war and at the same time planning to renew and complete the inner structure of Sweden. The earth is always young, always new to the youthful and the courageous. He had already conquered Ingermanland and Karelen. Livonia was soon to follow, so that the Baltic from Riga to its northernmost bay billowed upon Swedish coast. But the emperor shrugged his shoulders at the achievements in these remote regions. To him the Catholic Sigismund of Poland was still the rightful heir of Sweden, and Gustavus Adolphus only a rebel whom he would not even

Days of Victory

dignify with the name of king. All heretics he was resolved to extirpate without mercy, and such he had at close quarters. With a halo around her head the mother of God looked down from his banner upon the armies who with hands on the cross vowed to offer their blood for her. The inevitable conflict was come. Prague was overpowered and heavily punished. The Protestants fled from their shattered churches and demolished homes and looked about them anxiously for a leader. Who was strong enough to be in action the man of the new day? Who could assemble and carry them to victory, so that their young faith should not be a poor dwindling candle to be blown out forever by the storm?

All the evil spirits of war flew forth over Germany to harry and destroy for thirty whole years. The plough stood rusting while the horses were harnessed to cannon. The peasants had to pick acorns and dig up roots to still their hunger. Like great cloud giants the war-chiefs of the emperor advanced, strewing flame and smoke across the landscape. With trembling and wonder their soldiers looked up to them and followed them blindly through the rain of shot. What did it matter to a soldier, that he didn't get his pay? The gleam of burning stacks and farmhouses lighted him as he waded by night through swamps

Swedish Chieftains

and rivers and fought his way on to a city or a fortress where there were full cupboards and cellars to plunder.

Before a palace in Prague there stood at times a long row of six-horse coaches. The horses were led in to marble mangers, and bodyguards and pages of noble family flitted on the stairs. Every evening countless guests assembled in the illuminated halls, but the host himself was mostly invisible. If he appeared at the dinner table, he sat there silent in gloomy reserve. He was of pale yellow complexion, lean, with small black burning eyes. If at last he uttered a few brief words, the whole table listened breathless as to a magician, a mysterious voice from the unseen. Everything around him had to be silent. Attendants went about in muffled slippers, and nobles wound silk around their spurs to keep them from jingling. This was the most dreaded of all the cloud giants, and his name was Wallenstein.

As a youth Wallenstein had not fallen heir to large possessions, but he had married an old and very wealthy widow, who had died shortly and left him all her fortune. Through buying at a low price the castles and estates of the banished Protestants he accumulated an enormous landed property. Being a free-thinker, he troubled himself little over the wrangle of beliefs. With the

Days of Victory

help of his riches and military fame he raised for the emperor a great army and let the soldiers feed themselves like grasshoppers by ravaging whatever they found. From other and distant lands adventurers gathered and took service under his banners to win honor and booty. His wildest cavalry were the Croats. Where the silver-mounted bridles of the Croats glimmered through the powder smoke, Protestants and Catholics alike knew that there was no quarter. Such a scourge the German princes could finally endure no longer. They therefore compelled the emperor to take the leadership of the army from Wallenstein and give it to another of the cloud giants, the seventy-year-old but unconquered Tilly.

High up on the walls of Magdeburg, which were almost like precipices, the Protestants soon saw Tilly approaching with the troops who had grown gray under their banners. But what was this new and strange shout that came from the populace on the walls? "Down with the emperor's hirelings," was the cry, "and long live the king of Sweden!"

The doughty warrior who stood up in his stirrups looking about in every direction to lead the defense was a good Swede in spirit, though German by birth. It was Falkenberg, who had stolen

Swedish Chieftains

into the city in disguise. Notable things had happened on the Baltic coast, where a great royal fleet with Swedish banners had suddenly landed. It is a wretched fate to stay at home by the kettle worrying and lamenting over the evil of the times. The youthful Gustavus Adolphus was a believer in Greater Sweden, and the Greater Sweden party did not mean to limp in the rear and let other nations win the victories. To him the Greater Sweden idea was to regenerate and exalt the whole people and then with his people's aid to stretch his hand boldly toward the banner-staff in the foremost ranks of his time. Master Olov had not spoken in vain from his pulpit in the Storkyrka, though he now lay under an insignificant stone. Gustaf Vasa's grandson did not forget what should be his rightful Vasa heritage, but was now come to support his German brothers in the faith. Cities and fortresses fell into his hands, and his march proceeded, whether in dust or snow—preferably in snow, for with it his Swedes and Finns were more familiar. But would he be in time to save Protestant Magdeburg, which had made alliance with him? The Elector of Saxony sat gulping his beer, undecided what to think of his unknown guests, but refused to let the Swedes march through his land.

Tilly meanwhile had time for a strategem. Day

Days of Victory

and night his great siege guns had thundered before Magdeburg, where the people began to give up hope, but now all at once he had them silenced. When nightfall came, the exhausted defenders sat yawning at their posts with Falkenberg on the walls, but not a sound was heard from Tilly's camp.

"He knows the Swedes are approaching," thought the Magdeburg folk. "Contrary to his custom the old fellow is getting ready to flee. In a few days we can open our gates again." Glad at heart, most of them went home before dawn and lay down in their own beds to get a full sleep. But hardly had the bells of seven o'clock rung from the city tower when a dizzy storming-ladder was raised against the German walls. Followed by a band of dusky Walloons, climbed a man who never trembled. He was Colonel Pappenheim. When battle-lust or anger drove the blood to his head, two streaks like swords would redden above his knitted eyebrows. The higher he mounted the ladder, the redder grew the mark on his forehead. "Victory, victory!" he shouted, and at length set the imperial standard on the walls where the last sleeping sentry had quickly been cut down.

Falkenberg, who had started toward the town-hall, stood attentive and listened till he clearly

Swedish Chieftains

distinguished shots and turmoil. At the head of a sleep-dazed band whom he hastily gathered on the streets, he rushed to meet Pappenheim. Step by step he drove him back amid desperate hand-to-hand fighting, but at last fell before a shot.

The tocsin of the alarm bells and the rising smoke of conflagration gradually announced to the entire district that Magdeburg was conquered and destroyed. Wounds, hunger, and exposure, all these had the soldiers of Tilly braved for the sake of such hours as they now possessed. Here the poorest private might become rich to the day of his death if he only made a good haul. Here was no longer discipline and order, here one had but to break the locks and fill one's cloak. But who could drag along marble mantel-pieces or tables and chairs and glass windows? "Smash them up and let the rubbish burn!" That was the watchword of the robber horde. "Out with your goldpieces, you dog!" shouted the Croats when they got hold of some wealthy burgher. "Double that! Double it again! If you've no more, you shall die." Women sought to hide in cellars, in attics or under piles of corpses in the bloody streets. On the pavement of one of the churches at the last lay over fifty bodies of beheaded women. Children ran about crying for mother and father without an answer. The Croats laugh-

Days of Victory

ingly caught them by the feet, clove them with a sabre stroke and threw them into the flames. Joists and roofs fell crashing, and all Magdeburg was wrapt in such a sea of flame that the heat drove back the conquerors and compelled them to wait till the next day for their final plundering.

Tilly looked with weeping eyes over the heaps of ashes when he made his mournful entry between the ruins. The booty which his men took with them when he marched away had no attraction for him.

After further maraudings he sat one night in a hut conferring with his generals. The smoking fragments of Magdeburg had finally scared the Elector of Saxony from his beer-mug. With the Saxons as allies Gustavus Adolphus now moved forward to the conflict. It was for Tilly to decide whether he would meet the young conqueror in the open field next day. Doubtfully and mistrustfully the veteran leader shook his aged head. The red feathers which hung down from his hat to his back waved and swayed, and his grim countenance was ploughed with innumerable furrows and small wrinkles. Stern and shrewd, he surveyed his brother officers with dire solemnity behind his deep-set eyes. But Pappenheim laughed in his sleeve at the old man's timorous caution and struck himself on the breast impa-

Swedish Chieftains

tiently. There was on his body hardly a space the size of a hand where he had not scars and scratches. He was of the same age as Gustavus Adolphus, and there was a saying in his family that a Pappenheim covered with scars and riding a white horse would one day conquer a great king. He burned with ardor to mount his milk-white charger and prove the truth of the prediction.

As he spoke, the sword-like streaks on his forehead blossomed. At length Tilly yielded. Slowly he got up and buttoned his green coat. Unwittingly the council had met in a gravedigger's dwelling, and now the dawn began to shine in through the narrow windows. As they departed through the outer room, they noted that the walls were painted all over with skulls, crossbones, and coffins. Sullenly Tilly rolled up his hat-brim over his shaggy eyebrows and got into his saddle.

They were on the plains near Leipzig, and Tilly ranged his army on a ridge near the village of Breitenfeld. One of the Croats, who had lost his horse, stood on the summit by one of the great heavy cannon. His old-fashioned armor weighed so heavily on his shoulders that it was a severe burden. However, he began to jump on both feet as high as he could and point with his sabre. "There come the Swedes!" he cried joyously,

Days of Victory

making a still higher jump in his exultation. "I have good eyes, but I can't see that they have any cannon. Neither can I see any portfires or any crotches to set their muskets on. And their musketeers are mixed up with the cavalry like girls among boys in a dance. "I'll tell you what," he exclaimed after a moment's further reflection. "Those fellows there have simply no idea of the old and honorable art of war. Call them fighters? Why, they don't know their business. And dull, too, they must be from what I've heard. As soon as they have a bit of leisure, they line up and sing psalms. Pardon! Holy Virgin, but I know jollier songs than that. No, fie on all such herring-eaters!"

He did not mark that Tilly grew pale. The seventy-year eyes of the dreaded cloud giant saw more sharply than his. Through his telescope he saw the ingenious flint-locks on the Swedes' muskets and the light little cannon which they hid between their brigades. But what sort of cannon were those, which did not need more than one or two horses in front of them? Why, they were of leather. Ah well, to write on skins and dress in skins was an old affair, but to shoot with leather barrels was surely an idea for these northern brothers of the Lapps. No, surely things here were not as they should be, in the

Swedish Chieftains

opinion of either a Croat or of a distinguished white-haired general of the old school. Here was a youthful genius with a new art of war coming to battle with one that was old and superannuated.

Tilly's army stood drawn up in thirteen enormous squares. They were like thirteen great entrenchments, for in front of the musketeers of each square rose like walls the eighteen-foot pikes of the spearmen. The officer drew in his breath and shouted the orders. "Muskets in rest, blow on portfires, open priming-pans!" rang out slowly and circumstantially. Ninety-nine separate motions were sometimes needed before the musket finally went off with a heavy hop in the iron crotch that supported it. Such had been the way of fighting since the days of the Middle Ages. The autumn sun flashed on the cumbersome armor but was gradually obscured by clouds of dust and bluish smoke, and it grew darker. Light and flexible, the troops of Gustavus Adolphus spread out in long lines, and his small cannon began to play. Pappenheim was already down in the fire on his white charger to seek the king on the right flank, where he was wont to be. Seven times Pappenheim rushed forward to the attack, but each time was repulsed amid desperate fighting. At last the terrified

Days of Victory

horses turned and took their riders with them in swirling flight. Pikes and swords crossed, muskets sent out their lightning, and Tilly's fearful cannon shook the earth.

The dusk grew deeper, and the drums rolled, so that the soldiers might not lose touch with one another. Deserted by the Saxons, who had already taken to their heels, the Swedes continued to advance. With the indomitable Finlanders in front, the Smålanders and East Gothlanders rushed up the slope, while streaks of fire shone across their faces. But could these be sons of the Northland? The Croat, who still stood by the cannon, was puzzled. These men were dark of hue as if they had just crept out of the ash-heaps of Madgeburg. He then saw that one of them twisted his hair, and where his hand touched, the hair became light yellow. The powder smoke had laid a wet, dark color over skin and uniforms.

A horseman, who was always in the midst of the combat surrounded by flashing swords, had his costly lace collar so soiled that it looked like a gray rag. He was a man in the prime of life. He had a near-sighted squint in his eyes and was so corpulent and heavy that his horse panted and was all covered with lather. The rider held his head thrown back and had a waving green

Swedish Chieftains

feather in his broad-brimmed hat. On his breast was no protecting cuirass but only a jerkin of moose hide. This was the king of the Swedes. "Hold to it, my gallant lads!" he cried with a frank, chivalrous ring in his voice. "Think of our loved ones at home! One hour more, and the victory is ours for innumerable days and years to come."

"Jesus, Maria!" responded the soldiers of the emperor, and with that came the shattering notes of Tilly's trumpet-call. The Croat hurriedly snatched up a whip with knotted lashes. The gigantic siege gun, ornamented with images and coats of arms, had sunk one wheel deep in the earth and stood there tilted. Hitched to it was a team of fourteen pairs of horses. Some lay dead. The others reared at the lash of the Croat's whip. Foam dripped from their bits and their hoofs were raised in the darkness. But it was impossible to budge the antiquated colossus from the spot. The Swedes dashed forward, captured Tilly's cannon and hurled their fire against his own soldiers.

No one but the commanders could grasp any longer what was happening in the turmoil—no one but the superhuman cloud giants, who could see in the dark and who heard and knew everything. Tilly was nearly captured and sank al-

Days of Victory

most senseless under the musket blows that struck his head. His bravest soldiers made a square around him, and unsubdued in spirit though beaten as a general, he was borne off past the Swedish lines amid volleys of musketry.

The great victory of Breitenfeld was won, and the day drew on toward its close. The thunders of the battle had gradually grown still, but the king drew up his weary troops yet again in battle array. His army was his greatest treasure and he would not expose it to any surprise.

Once long before when he and his Finlanders had been caught by an attack from the rear, he had stood after the fight looking sorrowfully on the fallen. "How many an exploit," he said, "would not such heroes have accomplished if my imprudence had not led them to an untimely death!" Later experience had gradually made him cautious. When therefore he had this time prepared himself for every danger, he rode along the regiments and thanked them for a day which never should be forgotten. He embraced the serious Horn and praised his calm resolution, then shook hands with the spirited Banér. He finally commanded that each and every soldier should lie down for the night where he stood. After he had refreshed himself with a little food and drink at the sutler's he himself lay down in

Swedish Chieftains

a wagon. In it he had also had his couch the night before. It was long since he had slept in his own royal bed. Sometimes he took his rest in a tent, sometimes in a wagon, and the great nobles had to shake up and down on horseback or on wagon-boards as did he. This, too, was not merely an adventure of a few weeks or months, but the months lengthened into years.

Silence grew deeper above the sleeping army, who lay down in lines by their weapons on the trampled ground, and the candles of night began to twinkle. Master Olov, did you ever dream, when in your best days you went about in melancholy and disgrace, that your words would have such defenders?

A Småland horseman was sitting upright a few paces from the lighted wagon-lantern and staring at his sword. The musketeer beside him turned his head and said, "That's an uncanny blade you have there, a regular old headsman's sword. Wheel and gallows are engraved on the very metal."

"That is so," answered the Smålander. "One night a sick and low-spirited executioner in the depths of poverty came to my father's cabin and lay down before the fire. He took a little water into his hand, drank it, and said with a gloomy laugh, 'Many a superstitious invalid has im-

Days of Victory

aged he could be cured if he drank out of my despised hand. But me it does not help. My disease sits deep in my breast here and its name is melancholy.' The rest of us crept in under the straw as deep as we could, and when the dawn came we saw that he had died. Long afterwards that ghastly sword stood in the corner, and nobody dared touch it. But then the war came, and I hung it at my side."

The Smålander ceased a while, then proceeded: "In the bloody days of Charles the Ninth that sword made a widow of many a noble Swedish dame. That is something to make one think. We now no more use our steel against our own countrymen. Do you see who that is who carefully and respectfully but still like a good comrade is lying down beside the king in the wagon? That is Banér. His father was beheaded by the father of the king. There the two sons sleep together like brothers."

"Yes, other times have come for us Swedes," replied the musketeer. He then clasped his hands under his neck and fell into a sound sleep.

The king had already closed his eyes calmly beside his gallant Banér. Through his justice and chivalry, his father's former enemies and their stock had at last forgotten their ancient

Swedish Chieftains

grudges until they had become his devoted friends.

Only when the sun again rose did the army move forward to the abandoned camp of the imperial troops. There they found the bags of Tilly's war-chest, and in camp wagons they searched out the treasure plundered from Magdeburg and other captured cities. And what horses there were too! Yonder was a charger to bestride in the sunny tumult amid conquered standards and cannon. The saddles would have befitted princes. It often looked bare in the country churches and farm houses at home, but from now on there would gradually be a new pomp.

A victorious march was now made among the rejoicing Protestants, who called the king of the Swedes their saviour and leader. By night they roamed through deep forests where torches illuminated the road. Between vineyard-covered hills the march proceeded toward the splendid cathedral cities of the Catholics in the region about the Rhine.

LÜTZEN

After marching almost unopposed through Wurtemberg, the Swedish army went into winter quarters at Mainz. Here the famous chancellor Axel Oxenstierna came into communication with

Days of Victory

Cardinal Richelieu, who ruled the whole of France and was shrewd enough to make alliance with the heretical Swedes in order to spite the powerful emperor at Vienna.

In the following year the great Protestant army, of which the Swedes were now but a nucleus, advanced amid bell ringing and jubilation to the free city of Nuremberg. On the boundary of Bavaria behind the River Lech they found Tilly once more entrenched. The Swedish soldiers kindled a great pyre of tar and wet hay so that they could work invisible in the black smoke and lay a bridge of trestles. Then a troop of soot-covered Finns stormed rapidly to the other shore with spades and picks instead of weapons. Those who had not fallen began there to throw up earthworks as a protection for the army so that it might follow. Meanwhile the king stood aiming and firing the cannon with his own hands, and the thunder rolled across the country to the mountains.

Thereupon Tilly himself came from his entrenchments with stiff but eager steps. He had scarcely time to close his eyes and whisper his customary prayer to the Holy Virgin. Beside himself with mortification, he saw his men driven back. His hat brim stood straight up above his eagle nose, and his hair fluttered in silver-white

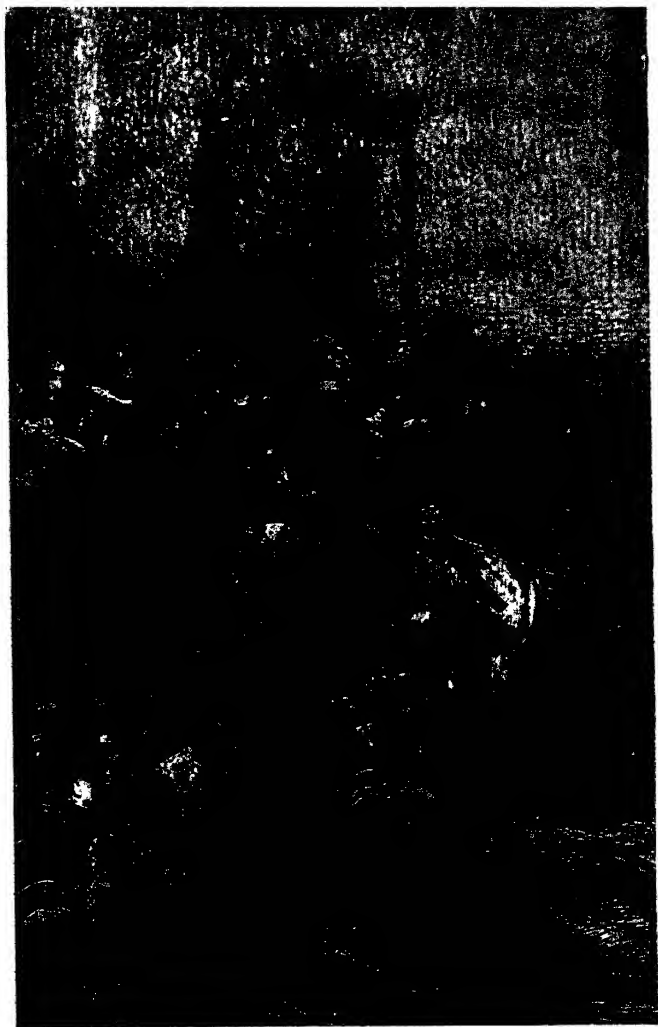
Swedish Chieftains

wisps about his wrinkled cheeks. Round about the bullets rained, splitting the trees above the wavering ranks. Without a moment's hesitation Tilly snatched a flag and hurried toward the shore at the head of his bravest Walloons. But suddenly the banner sank to earth. The lightning storm which was to fell the cloud giant with its bolt had finally come. With his leg crushed above the knee, he was carried off bleeding and helpless by his beaten and flying troops.

The Swedes went on through the open gates of Munich. The Protestants cried that now Gustavus Adolphus could avenge the destruction of Magdeburg. He, however, was above such deeds of blood and on the contrary gave the strictest orders that the city and castle with their many art treasures should be spared.

The terrified Catholics beheld the invincible Protestant army coming nearer and nearer to the emperor's capital. Tilly lay in his coffin, and the other yet more dreaded commander Wallenstein, who had been deposed for his arrogance, sat offended in one of his remote castles. The emperor besought him long and promised him immeasurable honor and power before he came forth again from his mist to reinforce the cause with newly-recruited regiments.

The Swedes now had to turn about to help



Drawing by E. Berggren

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS AT LÜTZEN

Days of Victory

their faithful friends at Nuremberg, since about four miles outside the city Wallenstein had built a huge camp. Before the towered walls of the city the Swedes took their stand like a staunch bodyguard. "So long as I breathe," said Gustavus Adolphus, "with God's help Wallenstein shall never see the inside of Nuremberg's walls." But in the end it was impossible to stay any longer by the starving city. One day the Swedish army ranged itself in battle array before the camp and waited in vain for an engagement. Only when they had departed did Wallenstein finally leave his camp and move off to harry the Saxons.

The Swedish king now set out to surprise his sinister enemy at Lützen, where, confident of being undisturbed, he had just sent off Pappenheim with a large body of troops. Men and horses sank deep in the moist clay, until late one November evening the Swedes could discern from the plain the steeples of the city. The highway from Lützen to Leipsic stretched across the level country like a high embankment. In the ditches behind this Wallenstein stationed his musketeers in the night. The Swedes lay in the muddy fields and the king reclined in an old wagon. His generals begged him to seek a better resting place, but he replied, "How should I have any pleasure

Swedish Chieftains

in being comfortable when I see the plight of so many around me?"

When the dawn began to redden, he refused to strengthen himself with food or drink. Fasting as before Communion, he took horse without armor, dressed in his jerkin of moose hide and a gray overcoat. A thick fog had spread across the plain, but the first psalms were already sounding from troop to troop. Far north in their homeland lay the farmhouses of the Swedes. There sat the elders waiting, laying down their work from time to time to listen at the gate if someone was not coming with a message from their sons in the war. "Beloved brothers and countrymen!" said the king, reining in his horse before the front line, "now has come the day when you shall show to the eyes of the world what you have learned in so many campaigns. The enemy whom we have sought so long stands now fairly before us, not encamped on inaccessible mountains or hidden behind strong fortifications, but in the open field. You well know how he has hitherto shrunk from an encounter. Onward then to fight for freedom, for a happy hour and a glorious eternity. If—as may the high God forbid!—you let yourselves be beaten, I give you my word that all is lost without reprieve and that not a bone of ours will return to our native

Days of Victory

earth. But wherefore doubt the courage of which I have seen such mighty proofs? I know that you are ready to go to death with me to-day for our sacred cause."

Yes, the sacred cause which had required of them so many heavy steps and so many sleepless nights,—that they would never give up, no matter what it might cost.

The mist had gradually become so thick that each division stood as if alone and abandoned without being able to see the others. With that the king struck up the battle hymn:

*"O little band, be not dismayed
Though from all sides your foes invade
With dreadful shout and clamor!"*

The whole Swedish army joined in with thousandfold voice, regiment after regiment, and the poorest private felt with glad certainty that each and every one of his brothers in arms on all sides was ready as he was. After a further pause the white disc of the sun began to shine out. Quickly the mist scattered and rose from the ground, and as it did so Wallenstein's army was visible, with Lützen in flames on the extreme left. "Jesus, help me to-day to fight for the honor of Thy holy name!" the king cried solemnly in a loud voice, his hands clasped on his sword hilt. "And now forward!"

Swedish Chieftains

Wallenstein, tormented by gout, had been carried around among his soldiers on a litter. He now set his foot cautiously in the swathed stirrup and swung himself on his charger. "Jesus, Maria!" shouted his soldiers. That was their watchword. "God with us!" rang the old war-cry of the Swedes as they dashed forward to the road and captured seven of the enemy's cannon. In various directions a mad conflict sprang up beside the deep ditches, and the king hurried off with his Småland cavalry. "Follow me, my gallant lads!" he shouted, spurring his horse without noting that the others, who had not as good mounts, were left behind. Once more the sun was hidden in misty darkness as if by a miracle, and swordblows rang on armor and brandished pistols. "That's nothing, my children," said the king gaily, when his followers saw that his arm was bleeding.

Pale, he leaned in the saddle against his neighbor, but with that he was struck by another shot from behind and sank from his horse. A devoted young page from Nuremberg, Leubelfingen, himself bleeding from many wounds, was the last man at his side. Prepared to die, the youth offered the king his own horse but was not able to lift him and could only support his head in his arms. "Who is the wounded man?" asked

Days of Victory

the enemy horsemen, surrounding them amid the powder smoke. Leubelfingen was silent and received in return a sword-thrust through the body, but the king opened his eyes and answered, "I am the king of Sweden." Then from the wild circle flashed a pistol shot which forever quenched his heroic life.

Horsemen threw themselves on the king's body and tore off his clothing and gold chain. Meanwhile, with a streaming wound on the neck and an empty saddle, his brown horse galloped back to the Swedish squadrons, where even in the midst of the battle tumult he knew he belonged. The soldiers at once recognized the horse and, beside themselves with grief, divined what had occurred. They had just been repulsed, but after such a sight they would have rather fallen to the last man than see the sun go down on a battlefield where their fallen king lay in the hands of the enemy. Duke Bernhard of Weimar, a brave Protestant who was always faithful to the Swedes, set himself at the head of the advancing army. "The defender of freedom is dead," he shouted. "Life is nothing to me any longer if I may not avenge his fall." His arm too was soon bleeding, but he hardly seemed to notice it; Stålhandske crossed the ditches with his men; Brahe sank with a shattered knee, and around him fell the yellow-

Swedish Chieftains

uniformed lifeguards who would not survive their king. It mattered little that Pappenheim returned and rode on his white horse as at Breitenfeld to seek his royal antagonist. In a short time he was carried back, shot dead, across the trampled furrows. Facing the autumn sun, which again sent its reddish light under clouds of mist, Wallenstein awaited the final attack with his cloak pierced by bullets. But when night came, the Swedish soldiers had reached their goal. The dark field where their chieftain lay amid so many of his bravest men was won.

Torch in hand, they set out among the fallen to seek his body. It was a sad search. Crippled horses raised their heads and stared at the torchlight, and wounded comrades raised themselves on their elbows begging for water. Finally the soldiers came to a place that was utterly silent. The fight had raged with great severity, and all lay in the sleep of death. It was hard to distinguish between friend and foe, for many had been robbed of their clothes and were nearly naked. The badges that had been distinguishing marks in the fray, green for the Swedes and red for the Imperialists, lay strewn about and trampled in the mire. The soldiers went about with bended forms, casting light on the pale faces, and under a heap of slain at last found the body of

Days of Victory

the king. Overcome with grief, they raised him from the earth and bore him to a village. His blood stained jerkin had fallen into the enemy's hands and was delivered to the emperor, who surveyed it long with moistened eyes.

Weary of religious feuds, Wallenstein continued to march about with his army, and the pains of gout made him ever more hard and bitter. With lavish pomp he was driven in his coach-and-six to the notes of gilded silver trumpets. Soon there arose a rumor that in his defiant mood he was about to rise against his imperial master. Some of the emperor's folk seized the ancient crown of Bohemia in Prague and brought it to Vienna, afraid that the general would solemnly crown his own head with it.

At the last, abandoned by almost all his minions, he sat one evening according to his wont studying his fate in the stars. They foretold unhappy events. Refusing to heed such predictions, he went to his bed to dream bold dreams of a general peace in the name of religious freedom. Everything around him had to be completely quiet as always. When therefore the servant by his bolted door suddenly saw before him a crowd of soldiers, he laid his finger on his lips as a sign to go quietly. "Friend," answered the leader, "now is the time for noise." With that he pounded

Swedish Chieftains

violently on the door, and when it was opened, forced his way in. Wallenstein stood by a table, bare-footed and in his shirt. But war had taught him how little it availed to waste words on a troop of murderers. To be silent had been his greatest and most mysterious gift in life, and now in the face of death he was silent still. "Are you the villain," demanded the leader, "who would betray his own emperor? You shall die!" Too proud to plead in his own defense, Wallenstein spread out his arms and, his breast transfixed by the pike of his assailant, sank to the floor and died without a word.

Long before this the coffin of Gustavus Adolphus had been carried across the sea to Nyköping and placed in a church until all should be set in order for the entombment at Stockholm. The councillors and people at home sorrowed for him as deeply as the army, for he had been great as a man and as far-sighted in peaceful as in military employments. He had scarcely an enemy.

Time after time his inconsolable widow, Maria Eleonora, had the lid raised that she might sit and behold the stiffened features of the dead. Her hero had fought out his fight of radiant victory and lay now before her wrapped in long folds of cloth-of-silver. She would have been more at home in other times, when faithful

Days of Victory

knights knelt by the lighted graves of their beloved. The present age walked with long and steady step on the solid earth to the roll of drums. How should the strict and magisterial Swedish lords with their brief apothegms understand and be patient with such a woman, who could control neither herself nor others? She was too weak and impolitic to have a voice in the affairs of the new Great Power. All she could do was to love and weep. At Nyköping she had an entire room fitted out in black velvet. Chairs, floor, and ceiling, everything was covered with black. Even the windows were hung with black, so that not a ray of sunshine could slip in. Here she sat clad in deepest mourning under torchlight, and those who passed the door could hear her sobs.

When after the funeral ceremonies the coffin was set under the floor of the Riddarholmskyrka in Stockholm, Maria Eleonora begged next day to have the key of the funeral vault so as to have the lid raised again for the last time. But the decorous lords of the council threatened to set a watch at the church door. She had still, however, in her possession a relic that was dearer than all else. This was a little gold snuff-box in which was enclosed the king's heart. It hung at night in a silken purse above her bed. By day she sat as before in a black-furnished room, holding it to

Swedish Chieftains

her breast. Moved by countless remonstrances, she finally parted with it. She wound the box in green taffeta and tied it with a silken cord. It was then laid by other hands on the drapery of the coffin, where it lies to-day.

Her sorrow was still unappeased. Dwarfs in fantastic costume sought to amuse her with their jumping and prattle. Open-handed as she was, she emptied her money-box to the bottom and strewed ducats and jewelry into all hands. But still the time seemed long. She spoke bitterly of the cold land where she was fated to live and grieve, till she resolved to depart from it forever. The venerable old Oxenstierna, regent of the land, however, shook his gray head disapprovingly in the negative.

At lonely Gripsholm, where she lived from time to time, a thick corridor of leaves led from one of the castle gates to an inlet of the Mälar. "I intend to pray six days together in my room," the queen declared one evening, and had food for six days brought in. She then locked the door from within, having no one with her but her lady-in-waiting.

Night came, and when all had gone to sleep she stole softly through the leafy walk with her companion to a rowboat. On the opposite shore of the park they were silently met by some friends,

Days of Victory

who were waiting under the oaks with saddled horses. The queen at once mounted, and the whole cavalcade hastened off in a dusty train on the road to the coast. Sometimes during the flight they had to stop and rest a while at some farmhouse. There the horsemen whispered to the peasants that this stately lady was the daughter of a rich merchant, who was running away from her parents. The parents were so strict and wouldn't let her marry the man she loved. Therewith they glanced meaningly at her eyes red with weeping and pointed to a long-haired cavalier, who seemed as if he might be the lover.

At Gripsholm the day slowly dawned. The court pastor placed himself at the closed door of the queen's chamber and read the morning prayer in a loud voice just as he had done before when she kept fast. "God knows what has happened here," he exclaimed at last, when he had to stand and sing all the psalms through alone without any voice from the other side. There was nothing else for the courtiers to do but break open the door. Vexed and surprised, they stood at the threshold and stared at the flies humming in the empty apartment. The widow of the great Gustavus Adolphus, of whom the whole world still spoke inquisitively, had in her discontent gone

Swedish Chieftains

off like an adventuress from his land, unwilling to live there longer.

But the years passed, and where he had his grave, thither stole continually the thoughts of his queen.

She came back too at the end so as to sleep by his side. It was the aged, insignificant, forgotten widow of a famous man who was borne through the re-opened door of the vault. But amid the laurels in that vault a shy little garland of remembrance still blooms invisible above a faithful heart.

NOTE

The short but brilliant reign of Gustavus Adolphus is the most glorious age of Swedish history. When he was hailed as king, in 1611, only seventeen years old, he first had to complete his father's war against the invading Danes. Next he had to carry on the war against Russia and succeeded in pushing the Russians back beyond Lake Ladoga, so that all the country around the Gulf of Finland became Swedish territory. Though famed especially as a warrior king, he did much to develop Sweden internally. He organized a system of taxation, endowed Upsala University, gave the Riksdag or Swedish parliament a permanent form, founded courts of appeal, stimulated mining and industry, and created a national Swedish army. With this army he entered the Thirty Years' War. He had already had to fight in Poland against King Sigismund, who still laid claim to the Swedish throne and, as a Catholic, was supported by the Emperor. In 1630 Gustavus Adolphus crossed over to Pomerania. In 1631 he defeated Tilly at Breitenfeld, captured Würtemberg, and went into winter quar-

Days of Victory

ters at Mainz. In 1632 he crossed the Lech and entered Munich, prevented Wallenstein from taking Nuremberg, and pursued him into Saxony. There the Swedish king fell at Lützen, November 6.

Gustavus Adolphus left only one child, the six-year-old daughter, Christina, who became queen. During her minority the country was ruled by five guardians, headed by the great chancellor, the best friend of Gustavus Adolphus, Axel Oxenstierna.

A strange fate overtook the daughter of the great Gustavus Adolphus, Queen Christina. Brilliant and ambitious, she soon became discontented with the simple land and austere faith of her father. In 1654 she renounced her claim to the throne and left Sweden never to return. She then united with the Roman Catholic church and betook herself to the city of the pope, where after many years she died and was buried.

Her successor to the throne was a cousin, Charles Gustaf, who, enlisting with the Swedish army in Germany as a private, rose in six years to the supreme command. This was at the close of the Thirty Years War; but not long after, as Charles X, the new warrior king, found himself in a struggle for the control of the Baltic.

The Key of the Baltic

THE SENTRIES breathed on their hands and rubbed their ears. They were hardened veterans, covered with glory, who had had their skin cracked and burnt in many an adventurous march of victory. Unweariedly they had followed Charles Gustaf through Poland, slept on frozen tussocks, defended themselves with the butts of their muskets, and accustomed themselves to trust blindly in their leader's luck. They now stood on the shore of Jutland, and the snow whirled like foam across the crested drifts. Though the night was dark, the eye could distinctly follow the lines of the landscape across the whitened waste.

"We have only jumped the Baltic from Poland to find ourselves here," grumbled one of the soldiers with a glance out into the dark, where the Little Belt lay frozen like an ice floe. After beating his clenched hand a while on his foot, which ached with cold in its ragged boot, he continued, "I thought there it was hard to trudge in the mire with my gun. But now I know it's even worse to stand still. Let anyone try it if he likes!"

"If we only had a mug of hot milk!" responded his companion, stamping up a swirl of snow. "It must have been the emperor himself that

Key of the Baltic

wheedled the Danes into hitting us from behind with this war when we were off in another direction. How will it end? How shall we get across these islands? Good weather—oh, it's all right to wait for that if you've seven fur coats to wear. Now no ship can get here. Nobody in the memory of mankind has heard of such a winter."

The other bent down again and rubbed his knees with all his might. "For three days the passage out there was open so that the water glittered," he struck in. "If it doesn't freeze still harder, you can send home your last greetings to your mother. But stop! Did you hear anything?"

A command sounded out of the mist, and the sentries at once clicked their heels together and shouldered their muskets. Trumpets shattered out their call from far away and were answered. Horses snorted, and their riders began the perilous crossing of the ice. Cannon rolled heavily forward in the snow, which stuck to the wheels so that they became formlessly big and broad. Last of all came the infantry somewhat to one side. The frozen sentries could now feel what it was like to walk and be warm.

Slowly the dawn broke, until in the light of a winter day the army could be seen marching over the wide sound, which was almost like a gulf.

Swedish Chieftains

The dragoons dismounted and scattered. Logs and boards had been dragged beforehand to the most dangerous places. At every step the crackling and swaying bridge might collapse. Only when the riders found that they again had firmer ice under their feet did they spring once more into the saddle. Soon they were out on the farther shore and fighting with the Danes.

Karl Gustaf meanwhile moved forward with his left wing to fall on the enemy's flank. From his youth up he had read with enthusiasm of the achievements of Alexander and Caesar. His heart throbbing with joy, he saw that fortune always follows the daring, for the cold weather held. Snow and cold, the Swedes' ancient allies, seemed again desirous of helping them to victories of which they had hardly dared to dream before.

Suddenly cries of agony reached him, and he turned violently around. The ice-field split and heaved behind him, and many horses and riders were already struggling in whirlpools without being able to save themselves. His wagon and that of the French ambassador also sank into the deep, where no doubt they are still with their dead horses on the mud of the bottom under the Baltic's waves. He hurried forward to the very edge of the great void, which had been the grave of so many, and encouraged the broken ranks

Key of the Baltic

to follow him and throw themselves into the combat on the shore.

The Danes then at last had to throw down their arms, and the victorious march proceeded across the entire island of Fünen.

After several days, however, there spread before the eyes of the Swedes another yet more extensive waste of ice, which in the gray mist seemed almost interminable. This was the Great Belt.

One evening Charles Gustaf sat merrily at dinner in the monastery of Dalhem. The table was covered with tankards a foot high, and his generals stretched out their legs and enjoyed the good cheer. The king himself was a very learned and well-educated gentleman, but war had been his life, and success as well as wine had put him into boisterous spirits. In Poland on one occasion he had not had time to take off his clothes for twenty days, and he counted indolence as a cardinal sin. But in times of leisure he liked to feel himself as a soldier in his tent, who diligently strives to see the bottom of his glass. Fifteen sons of princes had come as his disciples in the art of war. In bold address he had no equal, and everywhere he met with astonishment and admiration. Goodnaturedly and wholeheartedly he let his speech expand in large terms when he

Swedish Chieftains

talked of his military prowess. Then his cheeks and lips swelled out, and his goblet was soon empty.

As he was speechifying now about battles new and old, a man of slender but powerful figure stepped in. His name was Erik Dahlberg, and his longish face was full of thought. With his clean mode of life, his ability, and energy he was the ideal of a true Norseman. There was always a fresh, cool atmosphere around him as around a pine on a high mountain.

If he had been willing to sit down this evening and relate his adventures, what would these weather-beaten warriors not have heard! He had never turned a hair at stealing into the enemy's camp in disguise or climbing over a hostile rampart on a scouting expedition. Once on a ride he had been taken with the plague and, half asleep in a vertigo of fever, had directed his horse toward a deep wood. Sometimes he dismounted and stretched himself on the ground to rest his aching limbs, but he gradually grew so faint that he felt obliged to crawl back to his faithful steed. At last he came to a tavern and got a bed on a bench. There he heard how an unfortunate fisherman sitting near was lamenting to the landlord about his poverty and his hungry little ones. As well as he could in his feeble

Key of the Baltic

condition, Dahlberg raised himself on his elbow, ordered the man to be well fed and stuck several pieces of money into his hand. The next day the fisherman came back and discovered that the frightened landlord had carried the plague-stricken stranger down to the shore and left him to die alone. The fisherman made him a bed in his boat, covered it with a sail and hid it among the rushes. He then returned again and again with food for his benefactor and tended him as best he could. For a whole month Dahlberg lay half unconscious in the boat, until the plague-boils broke, and he began to mend. The fisherman then carried him home to his miserable hut of clay and straw. When his stiff riding-boots were pulled off, his feet were so black and swelled that Dahlberg thought he could never walk again. "It is for the good stranger's sake that God holds his protecting hand over our little hut," the fisherman said to his wife, for the plague had spared all under their lowly roof but spread death in the other cottages. When Dahlberg finally became so strong that he could be led to the churchyard, the fisherman showed him there the coffin which he had made ready for his burial.

To such a man there was no such thing as danger, and with quiet assurance he advanced to the king's table. "Here is the measure I have

Swedish Chieftains

made of how thick the ice is," he said clearly and resolutely, showing a stick with a deep notch. "I and eighty East Gothlanders have been out on the Belt as far as Låland and as a proof I have brought home with me a couple of Danes."

Charles Gustaf struck his hands together. "Aha, Brother Fredrik!" he exclaimed, already seeing the Danish king before him in imagination, "now let us talk in good Swedish."

Horses were harnessed in haste, and with Dahlberg at his side Charles Gustaf drove at a gallop to the quarters of the principal officers at Nyborg. It was two o'clock at night, and there was an ill-omened splashing as of a thaw at the house-corners. The sleep-dazed worthies rubbed their eyes, yawned a bit and greeted Dahlberg with ungracious looks.

Wrangel, the chief admiral, was not of a timorous disposition. On the bridge at Lech where Tilly fell he had had his first great baptism of fire and later in Christina's time he had led an entire army. He was a thorough convert to the Greater Sweden idea and was insatiable in his ambition for it. He knew that there on Seeland in the heart of Denmark were both silver and gold. The road thither lay across Låland, beyond which was Copenhagen. But he stuck out his long chin and crossed his arms. "The roof is

Key of the Baltic

dripping," he said roughly. "If we strike a thaw out on the ice, king and soldiers will have a grave without a cross. He who is foolhardy enough to give such advice will then be a disgraced chatter-box for the rest of his days."

One of the gentlemen beside him straightened his silken skull-cap and laid a hand on his thin cheek. His eyes wandered indefinitely about the room; tired, dull, without inner fire. "Harken, my good Dahlberg," he said in broken Swedish, "as sure as I was born a Danish nobleman and my name is Korfits Ulfeldt, this is sheer madness. May I remind you that it was not for amusement I fled from house and home before a royal couple who disregarded a nobleman's rights. Nobility—that is simply freedom. I wish I had the whole of Denmark in my hands like a handkerchief and could tear it straight across. But still I say: Go to your bed, my friend, and don't dream of leading the army over a thawing sea!"

Dejected and irresolute, Charles Gustaf said goodnight and left it to the two lords to reprove Dahlberg for his impudence. He, too, then went back, depressed and troubled, to his quarters in the town.

But just as he had laid aside his sword and was beginning to unbutton his coat, a dragoon

Swedish Chieftains

arrived breathless and whispered that he should go along back to the king.

Charles Gustaf had not been able to sleep a wink. It was in just such daring ventures that fortune had always been most gracious to him. Doubt and recklessness fought in his warrior soul and, heated by his thoughts, he half sat up in bed between his tossed pillows. His nightcap lay flung on the floor. At first glance his dove-like eyes and narrow forehead under the parted hair almost reminded one of a woman. Around his arm he had a bandage, a sort of talisman to draw out unwholesome humors. But then he gave a proud toss to his head, and the candle-light fell on the broad lower portion of his face. From his open shirt his breast and one shoulder gleamed out like mounded rocks, so that the small carved giants on his bed-posts seemed to hold fellowship with him as good comrades. He pushed the candle to one side and surveyed Dahlberg. The dove had now flown, and lightning shot from under his brows. At that moment the fate of two peoples lay and trembled in his hand.

"On your conscience," he demanded sharply, "speak the truth! Can you lead us across?"

"I will pledge my head, little worth as it is," responded Dahlberg. "I would take the army across if it was thrice a hundred thousand men."

Key of the Baltic

"You shall do it!" exclaimed Charles Gustaf, as if inspired, and threw off his coverlet. "You shall take us over. In God's name I will dare the trial, no matter what Wrangel and Ulfeld may say."

Dahlberg hurried out, steps resounded on stairs, and doors clattered. But in the morning when Wrangel spied what was afoot, he went up to Dahlberg in wrath. "Shame on you, who are robbing His Majesty of crown and sceptre!" he thundered. With his vexation was mingled envy of the man who had succeeded in getting the king's ear.

"No, I shall keep my word like an honest man," retorted Dahlberg, and rode off.

Darkness still prevailed when the cavalry began to move out on the snow-covered sea. The wet, trampled snow rose high on the horses' legs, and the rearmost had to wade. It was silent and deserted out there, and on both sides lay the blank horizon. None of the men knew how long there might be firm ice under the splashing, dripping water. Well on in the day the hungry squadrons finally reached Langeland, and the trumpets blew for a halt. But the cold had sharpened and transformed food and drink into hard lumps which had to be broken apart with axes and musket butts. Wine and beer tasted like ice water.

Swedish Chieftains

This was just to Charles Gustaf's taste, to be out amid dangers and no longer seated at his royal table.

When the first hunger was stilled, he rose, for the most perilous venture was yet to be made. Before him lay the widest sound, for it was ten miles across to the shore of Låland.

"Now, Dahlberg," he said cheerily, "you shall keep your word and show us the way!"

Dahlberg flung himself once more into the saddle and soon was visible only as a black point in the vanishing distance before the long bending lines of soldiers. The king waited a while, observing his venturesome progress with a telescope. He then hastened to follow the others. Yet deeper grew the silence, and the February sun began to sink slowly and gild the clouds; but long before the twilight had spread, a distant shout of joy proclaimed that Dahlberg had redeemed his word. The feat was performed, the Swedes stood on the solid earth of Låland. Wrangel hardly trusted his ears when he received the summons to follow with the infantry.

A trumpeter rode insolently up to the little fort on the island and ordered the garrison to surrender, but the commander told him to go to the devil. Toward midnight, however, the Swedes saw a crowd of lanterns come wobbling across

Key of the Baltic

the fields. It was citizens, who had come to capitulate, and next morning the commandant had appeared carrying the keys of the fort. Afterwards it was easy to walk across the narrower sounds to the southernmost point of Seeland.

A sledge now drew near with emissaries who wished to negotiate for peace. They stared in consternation, for the last thing they had expected was to meet the king on Seeland soil. "God has shown me the way," said he, full of swelling pride. "He built me a bridge, and I could not but go over it."

The snow lay in drifts as high as a house, and the emissaries did not spare warning admonitions. Yet ever onward went the march, though the men had a hard time breaking a road. "Give us but three days," begged the emissaries when they again reached the king. But he answered, "Not three hours." The affrighted countryfolk fled before him to the shelter of Copenhagen's walls, which had long been so dilapidated that bushes and trees grew between the fallen stones.

The peace commissioners were wont to meet in a room where a Swede lived. Once when some of the Danish lords came in, he lay behind the drawn bed-curtains without their noticing him. He then heard them whisper that they would

Swedish Chieftains

agree to all Charles Gustaf's hard conditions. No foreign or hostile fleet should any longer be allowed to slip in through Öresund or the Belts, and the two peoples were to join in a Nordic brotherhood. The Danes were resolved to surrender all of Bornholm, Blekinge, Scania, Halland and Bohusland. Only at the question of Trondhjem did they intend to show an absolutely unyielding front and to rise from their chairs.

After a while they departed. But later when the talk came around to Trondhjem, Charles Gustaf's representative knew what to do. As soon as the Danes got up, he also pushed back his chair as if to go. The surprised Danes then took their seats again and promised in that stipulation also to fulfill the Swedish requirement. The never-to-be-forgotten peace articles were signed at last in Roskilde, and when the Danish royal chancellor took the pen, he sighed, "Would that I had never learned to write!"

In the pleasure palace of Frederiksborg wax candles were lighted in the crystal chandeliers, and Charles Gustaf was entertained at a glittering banquet. Korfits Ulfeldt felt the color rise to his cheeks when he saw his former sovereigns and his hated fatherland brought to such humiliation. But King Fredrik and his proud consort, concealing their deep vexation, showed every honor to

Key of the Baltic

Charles Gustaf, and no act of enmity disturbed the festivities which a crushed kingdom gave its conqueror. He sailed on King Fredrik's yacht to the shore of Scania, which was now his and had always seemed meant to belong to the Swedish earth. A stone raised in a wood or by a stream no longer showed the dividing line; the wide surface of the sea was now the boundary.

NOTE

Charles X Gustaf, who became king when Christina abdicated, in 1654, was of the Vasa family on the side of his mother, Katarina, sister of Gustavus Adolphus. Though his father was a German, Johan Kasimir of Pfalz, Charles Gustaf was born and educated in Sweden. His reign marks the time of Sweden's greatest territorial expansion. By the treaty of Roskilde, in 1658, he forced Denmark to give up Scania and adjoining lands, which are now southern Sweden. This gave Sweden a natural boundary of water, and though in later wars the Danes invaded Sweden, the waterway has always remained the boundary between the two countries.

Filling the Nation's Coffers

“**W**HY IS money so scarce? Why do all the people look so low-spirited, though on holiday evenings they both dance and sing? My guardians have been mismanaging my land.” So thought the young Charles XI to himself.

When he stopped to talk in some cottage, no one suspected that the laconic youth in the coarse, weather-beaten blue coat was a king. But in that way he came to hear of the people's distress.

“It's gotten to be hard times for us small fellows,” the peasants muttered in their beards. “Nearly all the land has been given to the big folks. If a peasant grumbles, he gets the whip. If he takes it to court, his lord gives a wink to the judge, and the peasant loses his case. You ought to go to the manor house and see the goings-on for yourself. Rose-damask on the table, tankards, goblets, gold-rimmed glass, dancing, and musicians. Great beds with gold brocaded coverlets. Here you must lie on bare straw. Our little patch of stony ground is no joy to the eye. But up there are parks with long avenues of clipped box, fountains, and statues of plaster and iron. Why do you sit here eating turnips off a wooden dish? Why don't you ride up there? There you can have no end of pears

The Nation's Coffers

and apricots. His guardians have befooled the young king and made themselves rich."

"What's that fire smoking up there in the woods?" asked Charles.

The peasants took him by the arm and whispered, "Those are wood-rovers and deserters—soldiers who have run away from their colors because they've had neither food nor pay, only cuts and blows. Yes, we've even seen officers fleeing past here. They grew tired of starving in the king's uniform, gracious sir. That's how the great folk have run the country while the king was a boy. They're careful now not to let him find out how things are. They're afraid of a reckoning, you may believe. This is the way of it. Sweden is a mother who has given all her goods and gold to one of her children, so that she herself and the others have no longer enough to eat."

The king was astounded at what he heard and grew increasingly reserved and depressed. How could he get the upper hand with old, experienced lords who hushed up everything they wished to conceal? He had difficulty in bringing out his words; they stuck to his tongue while he stood twisting at his gloves. It was a good thing that he could bring down a wolf with a knife or a bear with a spear, but at the council-board there

Swedish Chieftains

was no question of hunting exploits. There it was knowledge and a clear head that were wanted, and he had neither. He seemed more like a rough soldier boy out of the ranks than a king's son.

The royal chancellor Gabriel De la Gardie, on the contrary, was an urbane and brilliant gentleman. Infatuated with his vivacity and French refinement, Queen Christina had heaped estates upon him, and he himself strewed silver and gold freely about. To the learned he was a generous patron. He dreamed of being another Oxenstierna, but the hard roads of reality are not as short as those of dreams. Rather than wear out his working chair, Magnus Gabriel would sway in his gilded carriage amid bowing subordinates. The counts had their parks, but the Swedish Crown had scarcely an oaken plank to mend a ship with. Carefully as the worthy Per Brahe strove for economy, he could not conjure money into the empty national coffers. In his desperation he sent Swedish soldiers to serve for foreign hire. This was an ill expedient, and now war broke out again at the ends of the realm. The fleet had to go out, but things went wrong with sails and steering gear. The mouldy ropes broke, the admiral's ship, The Crown, lost her anchor, and the boats bumped together. Everything went

The Nation's Coffers

equally badly. A large proportion of the crews consisted of vagabonds, handicraftsmen, and prentices, who had never felt a deck swing but lay along the gunwales gasping, sea-sick and deathly pale. They made a wretched cruise, and Charles arrived in Stockholm at a wrathful gallop to seek again an answer to the riddle why everything in his land ended in pitiable failure.

When he came to the navy storehouse he saw that the cordage there was old and rotten. "There is something else that is rottener still," he thought as he went on to the officers in charge. "It isn't the will that's lacking," they said, "but money, money." He thereupon opened the account books and found to his consternation that the income of the present year had already been consumed. Sweden reminded him of a traveller who had eaten all his rations the first day out but had to keep on going day after day without any fresh supplies. He now understood how grimly he had been misled, and turned back to his apartments with heavy steps. On no one could he depend, on no one but himself, though he was but a youth of nineteen. He had no wish to sit listening any longer to his councillors; a plain man could more easily win his attention than a whole concourse of elegant nobles. From that time all was over with their sunny days. His

Swedish Chieftains

helplessness forced him to rouse himself and develop quickly. Hastily he sought out capable men, unnoticed before, men who could set his fatherland in order, and he himself worked far into the night. Discouraged, almost in despair, he wished sometimes to be dead and quit of it all, and he only felt himself really contented when he was drilling his soldiers. If an officer bungled his duties, the king would unhesitatingly strike him on the ear with the flat of his sword. He became ever surlier and harder, but at the same time firmer of will.

He often threw himself into the saddle and rode about the country, not now to bang with his shotgun but to organize and improve. The enemy threatened from the south, and when he heard that the Norwegians were moving on him from the other side, Dahlberg could hardly stop him from going against them with the only two regiments that were available.

From the church tower at Ystad he was soon able to behold through Dahlberg's telescope how his newly-equipped fleet went forth to their first thunder-play with the Danes. The undaunted Klas Uggle hastened to attack the nearest enemies in his flagship *The Sword*. The Crown attempted to follow, but careened as she tacked, so that the water rushed in through the lowest

The Nation's Coffers

port-holes. The crank line-of-battle ship could not right herself in the gale but sank into the waves. The terrified sailors cast away their linstocks, and the fire soon crawled along the tarred planks until it reached the magazine. A lofty flame shot up with a deafening roar, and the shattered hull immediately sank to the bottom. The other Swedish vessels made off home, all but Uggla, who was surrounded and neither could nor would flee. Such a rain of glowing shot was cast on The Sword that she too was set on fire. When the flames finally reached Uggla, he leaped into the sea and perished, but long into the night the vessel continued to burn out on the deep.

Unwitting of the disaster, Charles sat in the church at Malmö next day listening to the sermon. Suddenly the windows began to shake with the concussion from Copenhagen, where the news of the victory was being hailed with salvoes of joy. Outside Copenhagen the Danish army was in a splendid encampment some two miles long. The haughty queen dowager, who in her youth had been forced to entertain the victorious Charles Gustav with banquets, went gladly among the soldiers. With song and martial music the men embarked on the returned fleet and crossed over to Sweden to reconquer Scania.

The Scanians themselves gradually deserted the

Swedish Chieftains

retreating Swedes, and in the wayside woods, the cliffs and precipices began to be illuminated as of old with torches and camp-fires. The wild marauding bands were called snappers. Once when Charles sat alone in the rectory at Åhus eating his simple fare of porridge, the buildings were suddenly surrounded by the snappers. The minister bade him climb quickly up the chimney above the hearth, after which he closed the damper. There the king had to stay while the snappers searched the cupboards and beds. Finally they settled down in the minister's room, calling for food and full jugs. This he nowise refused but entertained them so generously that after a carouse they began to doze off as they sat lolling on the benches. The minister then went to the room where he had hid the king and carefully assisted him down from his uncomfortable hiding-place. His hands and clothes were black already, but the minister thought the job only half done. He therefore rubbed soot over the king's face and hung a basket of charcoal on his back. Equipped in this manner, Charles XI succeeded in stealing off without being recognized.

At such moments of peril the king's eyes kindled with joy and energy, but for the rest he often sat sunk in moody lethargy. When officials besought him for a sudden decision, he kept an

The Nation's Coffers

obstinate silence, and they stood with drooping hands, uncertain what to think. The people grumbled. The lords whom he drove out of the room with a sword or a poker muttered angrily of his narrow-mindedness and inferior talents.

Some opined that such an unskilful monarch ought to be relieved of the trouble of ruling the Swedes, and the majority thought that at least he should be induced to keep away from the army so as not to hinder capable warriors from doing their best. Little did they suspect the bitter strength of the liquor at the bottom of the flask, if but the right hand could be found to unseal it. They therefore sent him a man called Johan Gyllenstierna to talk sense to the melancholy and mistrustful king. It turned out that Gyllenstierna was a councillor after Charles' own heart. He was tall as a giant and could squeeze together a silver beaker or straighten a horseshoe with his bare hands. His woolen hose slipped down in wrinkles, and he clumped along heavily in his walk. He was consciously rough in manner and speech so as the more to contrast with the Frenchified refinement of the old counts, whom he hated. "Till the Crown demands back from the big-wigs every inch of earth that they have grabbed or filched, Sweden will never get on her feet," said he, as he cut himself mighty slices of

Swedish Chieftains

boar steak. After that he emptied two tankards of beer one after the other and reflectively stroked his luxuriant raven-black hair. These were words which Charles liked to hear, and the Swedish simplicity and indomitable vigor of the man's will aroused his confidence. To him he listened. "I've said one thing; I may as well say two," continued Gyllenstierna, when he came to his tobacco pipe. "Our provinces south of the Baltic have been nothing but a disturbance and a bother to us. It would be better if we lived with the Norwegians in a great united realm behind our skerries. Your guardians in their need of money have entangled us in a war. Punish them when the time comes! But rather than give up Scania I'd see all of us, king and soldiers, lying shot dead in the snow."

The mortification over his reverses, which had made the young man gloomy and embittered, was changed by such talk into a new eagerness for action. Grizzled and seasoned heroes stood about him and followed him with joy. After several engagements the army was drawn up one December evening for a decisive battle. It was on the plain at Lund. The moon threw her disconsolate light over pale, emaciated faces, for hunger and frost had long been of the soldiers' fellowship. But now even the sick dragged them-

The Nation's Coffers

selves from their burrows and took their place in the line. Charles himself sat with moist eyes writing a letter of farewell to his mother, prepared to conquer or die. His chance was come, all undecision was over, the shadows on his name should now be dispelled.

When the moon went down and the darkness settled in, the army advanced toward Helgona-backen. The Danes, who stood less than four miles off behind ditches and stone walls, saw the long ranks of the Swedes in the light of the dawn and hastened to the same quarter so as to be first on the height. From both sides the kings hurried to the front, and on the hill their cavalry encountered.

The sun rose on the glittering white plain where the infantry was, still far behind, but the smoke concealed the melee of the cavalry, and the losses were heavy. At the critical instant Nils Bielke rushed forward with five squadrons of mounted life-guards and, surrounded by bleeding officers, drove the enemy back with sword in hand. Eagerly Charles encouraged his men with glad shouts and spurred into the wildest of the tumult. A shot struck his charger on the forehead and glanced up against his hat, but he swung himself smiling on another horse and continued his course with the same contempt of death.

Swedish Chieftains

In the semi-darkness he caught sight of red banners. Red was the color of the Smålanders, and he therefore turned his steed impulsively toward them so as to lead the regiment forward. Then suddenly there fluttered before his eyes the Danish cross on the red ground, and at any moment a deadly shot might have been fired. He realized his mistake, but without losing his presence of mind shouted to the men in Danish to keep the game going and move against the enemy. So bravely could the awkward youth now behave himself. They thought he was a Danish officer and obeyed. Unnoticed meanwhile, he found his Swedish lads again and stormed with them after the beaten and flying Danes.

It began to draw towards evening, and his men had gone all day without rest. Then came a message that the other division of the army had also won its way to Helgonabacken after a desperate struggle. He at once turned with his cavalry and at the head of a thinning band of life-guards dashed through the Danish lines. The Swedish infantry stood there, weary and dispirited, and the evening sun was already sinking behind the rim of the snow.

"Boys, boys, there he comes—there comes the king!" exclaimed Niels Bielke suddenly, pointing to a row of cavalry that drew near at a gallop.

The Nation's Coffers

The soldiers then quickly raised their muskets again and threw themselves into the fray with new spirit. Only gradually did the strife abate, until the moon shone again over the land where half the two armies lay dead; but Scania was saved for Sweden. Deeply moved, the king embraced Bielke and stammered out his heartfelt thanks to the survivors of the life-guards.

Hakvin Spegel, poet, psalm-singer and prelate, then advanced, and all bowed their knees in the bloody snow: "The God of hosts has watched over us and led our steps," he said. "Ye hear still about you the wails of the wounded. Let each man haste as well as he may to the help of the unfortunate. Let there be no more difference between friend or foe, Swede or Dane. All, friends and enemies, known and unknown—all are our fellowmen."

After that day nobody dared any more look over the shoulders of the youthful king. Around their steaming camp-kettles the soldiers talked of his exploits amid the hail of bullets and dwelt on his courage and stubborn pertinacity. The peasants drew a sigh of pleasure when they heard of his strictness of thought, his piety, his uprightness, and his snubbing of all negligent officials, whether they were judges or counts. Better than anyone else, however, did Long Jan—as Gyllen-

Swedish Chieftains

stierna was commonly called—notice how the youngster had developed in the hard hours of trial. He shrewdly kept the other councillors at distance, and far into the night Charles and he sat together working, each with his mug of beer posset beside him.

It was also he, Long Jan, who now, after peace was made, had to pull off his boots and red-yarn stockings to dress up in silver and satin and bring home the king's bride from Copenhagen. Ulrika Eleonora, the young Danish princess, had even in the midst of the burning war held fast to her ancient promise of becoming Charles's queen. Gentle and lovable as an angel, she had even pledged her precious betrothal ring to help the poor Swedish prisoners of war. None of her train followed her when, in company with the dowager queen of Sweden, she finally landed near Halmstad. Charles was always so bashful and shy of company that only a few guests were invited to the ceremony. Ulrika's mild nature seemed hardly to the liking of the cold, severe man whom without complaining she promised always to obey. When the wedding was over late in the evening the king sat down to dinner in his own room with two men. His bride had to begin her life in the new land by sitting at table in another room alone with her old mother-in-law.

The Nation's Coffers

A few days later Charles rode off on a rapid tour to inspect fortresses and hold a reckoning with the nobles and former guardians who had mismanaged his country. In the midst of councils and debates Gyllenstierna was taken sick and died. In his coffin this simple and frugal man was clad once again in the glittering attire he had worn at the feasts in Copenhagen.

"Long Jan is gone," said the youthful junkers of the lower nobility as they sauntered before the Riddarhus at Stockholm. "But what the king has begun need not therefore stop. No, let him put an end to our Swedish princelings and their estates! Is it fair that a few families should have so much earth tax-free, and we others have to pay double? Now there will be a little room for us."

But time passed, and the junkers began to look uneasy and yellowish when they came through the falling snow with their hands stuck in big muffs. The king had kept up his tussle with the nobles and had carried it further than anyone had dreamed. After counts and baronets had been crushed, came unexpectedly the turn of the junkers themselves. All ancient crown-land was to revert to the Crown. This was called reductioning. The king locked himself up in the castle at Stockholm for weeks to work uninterruptedly without ever going out into the open air, so that

Swedish Chieftains

his health began to suffer, though he was still a young man. In the depth of night, however, a rider was sometimes seen in a flowing cape with a long broadsword at his belt rushing by at break-neck speed. Mostly the panting steed was but a lumbering draught-horse, which would be exchanged for a fresh one at the next inn. This was the diffident king of the Swedes, the father of Charles XII.

As at his marriage, he continued to eat in a small room with a few gentlemen or with his mother, the old queen dowager, to whom the great architect Tessin would show his drawings and engravings. Ulrika Eleonora had to sit alone all day with her book. No one heard her lament her fate, but she lost color and pined, worn with illness. When she lay on her death-bed, there wakened in Charles the true friendship for her which had gathered through the years at the bottom of his heart, but then it was too late. She bade him be kind to his people, and illuminated by a smile of happiness at having won over this heretofore implacable man, she passed away.

The king had become hated for his severe but necessary "reductioning" and believed he could depend on no one. His times of melancholy recurred ever more frequently. By thirty-one his hair was already gray, and the continued work

The Nation's Coffers

had undermined his health so that he himself soon saw his days were numbered. Unpretentious and simple, as he had lived, he wished to remain in his last sleep, and he gave instructions that he was to be wrapped in a linen shroud without either crown or sceptre.

NOTE

When Charles X Gustav died, his son, who became Charles XI, was only a child. During his minority the great nobles had an opportunity to increase their power, which had already waxed great during the incessant wars. Many of them had returned with rich spoils after the Thirty Years' War; they built splendid castles, and some of the more powerful reigned like kings over vast stretches of Swedish lands. They attempted to make serfs of the peasants, as they had seen it done in southern countries. It was the great achievement of Charles XI that he restored the ancient liberties of the Swedish peasants and reduced the inordinate wealth of the nobles by his "Reduction" of the great estates, begun in 1680. He was not a warrior by inclination, but he was forced to fight what proved the bloodiest battle in all the inter-Scandinavian wars, the battle of Lund, in 1676, where one-half of those who took part were killed. By this battle he established for all time the coastline boundary of southern Sweden. Charles XI died in 1697 and was succeeded by his son, Charles XII.

The Charles Men

THE GREAT CONFLICT BEGINS

MORE than a hundred times three hundred winter nights had glittered over Moscow since Ivan the Terrible had pattered around the palace corridors in his soft slippers. "Over there," he used to say, standing still for the moment, "over there across the Swedish strip of land on the Baltic is the way to the ocean for mighty and holy Russia."

Moths had eaten into the red cloth above his tomb, but in the unchanging dusk of the crypt countless little lamps still burned before the icons of the saints. These were Russian saints with broad black beards. Equally shaggy and wild were the peasants who crept there on their knees to kiss the gravestones and images. Human beings grew like grass, then withered and died like grass in that interminable empire, and no one could count their multitudes. Up to the Arctic Ocean and far away into the snowstorms on the desolate Siberian tundras rose their huts. Wrapped in sheepskin coats, they slept their long winter sleep by the stove. Thousands of pilgrims journeyed to the ancient revered city of Moscow, which was so unlike anything else in all the world.

The Charles Men

Cupolas shone bright green or a deep nocturnal blue with golden stars, and large-eyed, gigantic Christ faces covered whole walls within. The rails of the choir were ornamented with precious stones, and everything glimmered with ancient, wild, and melancholy beauty. It was a realm cut off from other nations, and when the tsars thought good they commanded all foreign postal intercourse to stop, so that every true Russian could spit into the fire and say, "Where Russia ends, the world ends."

But finally a young tsar chanced to wander through the dismal crypt. He was so tall and thin that beside him all the kneeling pilgrims looked like mere bundles tossed about the pavement. "What can I do with my barbarians," he said, "if I do not first shave off their beards and make them into Westerners? But I should rightly begin with teaching myself first of all what a Westerner ought to know."

With this intention and a glint in his eye this bold genius went out into the world as a prentice. He looked carefully at everything that could be of use to him. He stood as a carpenter with his axe at a shipbuilder's in Holland and practised the art of making boats. Of evenings he dipped his pen and continued to govern his realm from a distance. At last the rumor was spread that he had

Swedish Chieftains

died, but he then hurried home and gave the liars a bloody chastisement.

Saxony and Poland were ruled at this time by August the Strong, an agreeable and frivolous prince, who had such physical strength that he could easily bend a horseshoe. In his fine, luxurious halls gleamed mirrors and candelabra. Delicate gilded festoons of flowers climbed up the white walls and pretty women peeped above their fans from every sofa. To make themselves yet more entrancing with their powdered hair and painted pallor they would stick little black silk patches or beauty-spots above the lips or by the eyes. Tsar Peter was himself as gay of spirits as August, and at a clamorous drinking-bout they threw themselves into each other's arms. First they exchanged swords, then clothes. Then they embraced afresh. Kisses resounded without cessation on forehead, cheek, chin and finally on the middle of the mouth. Wine ran over their shoulders from the glasses they still held in their hands. In lofty and endearing terms they vowed to each other eternal friendship and that they would twist the necks of the Swedish birds of prey.

"The Danish king needs our help against the presumptuous Swedes," said August. "But before the three of us go to the attack, each from his

The Charles Men

own direction, we must guard our secret and persuade the Swedes that we think of nothing but peace. Over there, over there to the Baltic, tsar, goes your way, if you would build harbors and ships."

"Brother, brother!" ejaculated Tsar Peter, as he lifted his friend high above the floor, for he too was a powerful athlete. "I have bought my best cannon from Sweden. I said I needed them against the enemies of Christendom, the Turks. The Swedes shall fall before the lightning of their own metal. If I can ever get a couple of wagon-loads of Swedish prisoners, I shall plant them out like turnips. They shall show my shepherds how people should blow their noses. They shall teach my Muscovites to wash and to read print. In all such arts the Swedes are masters; they are afraid of neither books nor soap. An ordinary captain can stand and wash himself in the middle of the week and then sit down and write a long letter as if it were the simplest thing on earth. I imagine already the end of the story, O my Russians! The Swedes shall be our teachers and we shall take their land."

At his home in Kungsör, meanwhile, Charles XII roamed the woods unconcernedly. He scorned to hunt a bear with guns. To thrust a wooden fork around the neck of the grinning monarch

Swedish Chieftains

of the wilderness and hold him erect till the others could throw a noose around his hind feet—that was all he considered fair hunting. It happened sometimes that bruin in return knocked his wig off with a paw.

One day a terrific growling and racket was heard from among the pines. Preceded by musicians who played victorious music, a long sledge drove up. It was laden with live bears which Charles and his hunting companions had stunned with their cudgels and then captured. Thereupon a hot and excited gentleman advanced to the king in the midst of his youthful diversions and related that Sweden was at war.

The eighteen-year-old hunter clenched his hand and reddened. Nothing seemed to him so base as to break one's plighted word. When he was a child, it happened that his mother came into the room to take him to divine service. To her astonishment neither with good nor harsh words could the boy be made to rise from the chair he sat in, shut behind a wooden bar. Finally it was discovered that he had promised his governess when she went out to remain seated in the chair as long as she was away. There, then, he obstinately sat with tears in his eyes till she returned. On another occasion he chanced to drink too much wine and in his excitement behaved

The Charles Men

rudely to his venerable grandmother. As his head slowly cleared, he grew ashamed. He thereupon filled a glass with wine, went to the old lady, emptied it to the bottom at a draught, and promised never again to taste a drop of wine or beer in all his life. That vow too he kept to the day of his death. A mug of small beer used to be set at his scanty board, where bread and butter and roast pork were his favorite fare, but even so he cared to drink nothing but fresh water. To keep one's word was to him the first and last of duties. But to him, too, had August the Strong vowed friendship. Charles had defied and challenged him already, and now from the hour when his word was broken was implacably resolved to teach his enemies the manly virtues.

When he had equipped his men, he went one evening to his grandmother and sister, saying that he meant to rest several days at Kungsör. They pretended to believe him, but as soon as it was dark on the silent streets he took horse and galloped off on the southern road to his waiting troops. In the spring twilight he caught a last glimpse of the ruins of his ancestral palace, burned accidentally at the time of his father's death. There too were the bridges and squares across which he would not be carried home until eighteen

Swedish Chieftains

years after, when he would return as a grizzled, scarred corpse. The great conflict had come.

Charles first steered his fleet to the shore of Seeland, where one summer evening amid the roaring shot a red standard fluttered at the mainmast of the flagship. This was the signal for landing. The men hastened to the pinnaces, but the coast was shelving, and both officers and soldiers leaped from the boats and waded forward in the water. Amid the breakers began a bloody encounter with the Danish cavalry, and the water came up to Charles' armpits. This was the first time he had heard bullets whistle. Dripping wet, he ran up among the tussocks of shore grass and cleared the way with his sword straight into the enemy's entrenchments. Afterwards he fell meekly on his knees with all his band and gave thanks.

Hardly had he settled matters with the Danes before he learned that his second and most dangerous enemy, Tsar Peter, had moved against Narva.

Charles picked out the bravest and stanchest men in the army for his guard. It was a body in which the personnel consisted of ensigns and lieutenants, and in which no one grew pale or trembled before shot or blow. He himself rode almost every day forty miles or more and in the

The Charles Men

midst of a rapid trot could pick up a glove from the ground. His guardsmen took it as a glad duty to be his equals in agility and boldness. If an exacting day was before him, he would mount a strong peasant horse which his father used to ride to fires and which was therefore called Brandklipparen. When the soldiers recognized Brandklipparen's broad flanks, they knew there would be many steps to go. Faithfulness to promises and a spotless character were demanded of every man, together with alacrity, and all competed in trying to resemble their sovereign. The army felt itself invincible as they gathered around such a leader and joined in their war-song: "On lads, on in the name of God!"

When Charles had made his preparations he led his warriors on their ships again and weighed anchor. The sea foamed ice-green in the autumn gales, and the high-masted vessels swayed and jumped so that in the confusion many of the horses were trodden down and had to be thrown overboard. Gradually the east coast of the Baltic emerged, where the Swedish dependents were looking in terror from the forts and city walls for the innumerable hordes of the tsar. All unnecessary baggage was left behind, and the "Charles Men" set out on their first adventurous wandering. At night they had to sleep amid

Swedish Chieftains

snowstorms, and in the devastated regions there was hardly a truss of hay for the horses, not to mention a decent loaf of bread. Hungry and freezing, they descried at last the distant towers of Narva. They at once fired a salvo, so that their compatriots in the city and the besieging Muscovites might know what guests had just arrived.

They had no alternative but to starve or attack the following morning. The dawn grew gray, and once again the Swedish cannon thundered, as if inviting the Russians to come from their intrenchments. For that, however, they had no taste, though they had the odds of seven men to one. And where in the name of the saints was their tsar, the pugnacious Peter? Men had heard weeping and lamenting from his tent, and it was surely true that he had got to saddle and fled into Russia as fast as his horse could go. Many of the Russians had no other weapons than bows and arrows. In the art of war they were as yet but little practised, but one thing they all knew: namely, that the Swedes were soldiers to be dreaded. A cloud of innumerable snowflakes rolled toward them across the plain and blew into their faces so that they could hardly see.

Hidden by the snow-gust, Charles hastened forward with his disciplined men. He did not look very dreadful as his slender figure advanced

The Charles Men

on the heavy steed. His hot, ridiculous peruke he had long since thrown away, resolved never again to wear such a fool's hood. The mighty broadsword, the stiff moose-leather gloves, and the thick-buttoned rough boots seemed much too large for his youthful body. The coat-tails rolled up and lined with yellow wool made him seem yet narrower in the waist, and his countenance was that of a rosy boy. Only the glance in his eye gave token of who he was, and a thousand adventures played in his head. Quick-sighted and resolute, he led his little band, and when the sun suddenly pierced the snow-cloud and glittered on the flakes, he was close upon the enemy.

The Muscovites threw away their bows in terror. Amid the tumultuous flight they turned their sabres against the foreign officers whom the tsar had given them as military instructors. The hungry Swedish soldiers leaped across through their tents so that the laden tables were overturned, but thought neither of food nor drink, only of following their victorious hero. His horse finally sank up to its neck in a morass. Two Finns hurried up and pulled him out, but his sword and one of his thigh-boots stuck in the slime. He snatched the sword of one of the Finns, and an attendant handed him his boots, which he pulled up on his naked and lacerated legs. Wet through

Swedish Chieftains

and stockingless, he kept up his wild pursuit all evening in the biting cold. When it was finally so dark that the fugitives could no longer be followed, he went in his dripping clothes to a camp-fire and lay calmly down to sleep with his head on a soldier's knees. When the man helped him to loosen his neck-cloth, a flattened bullet fell down in the snow.

Round about the guardsmen reclined with drawn swords, a gold band shining on each of their three-cornered hats. After a time several Muscovites came to negotiate for quarter and leave to depart free. Charles got up and looked about irresolutely with shy embarrassment. Then an idea glimmered in his youthful mind and he stretched out his hand. "Quick, bring my horse," he said, "so that I may look as imposing as possible!" When he had mounted to the saddle, the Muscovites were brought forward, whereupon they took off their two-foot fur caps, knelt and threw their sabres before the horse's feet.

In order that the Swedes might not show how few they really were, they were drawn up next day in a long line. Then the tsar's army was made to march past with bared heads before their return. They laid down before the king their broken pikes, bows, muskets, drums and flags, so that finally a whole mound of trophies was raised.

The Charles Men

Now came the turn of August the Strong, the third enemy, who had started to besiege Riga. There with his seventy-five years on his back old Dahlberg went about the walls with the energy of a youth, seeing that every man was at his post. As soon as Charles had come up with his warriors, Dahlberg sent barges with burning straw and manure on the Dwina River. The smoke soon thickened into a gray curtain and concealed for a time the long row of boats which drew near the foe with a multitude of lifted musket-barrels. Charles rode up among the shrubbery, and the guardsmen followed in a wild race for life and death. Though their leader, Arvid Horn, received a bullet in the knee-cap, he sat upright in his saddle till the enemy was routed. Only then did his brothers-in-arms lift him down from his horse.

On down into Poland the Charles Men now continued their march, uncertain of whether they should ever see home again. When the cold grew severe, the king warmed his tent with glowing cannonballs, and with his dog Pompey as companion slept more contentedly than in the greatest palace. If one of his gentlemen succeeded in finding quarters in a hut, Charles would steal there mischievously by night and smash the window-panes. Finally he would no longer hear of

Swedish Chieftains

his soldiers' throwing up earthworks around the camps; the bullets, therefore, flew straight across his tent. Covertly State Secretary Piper once had some haystacks set up behind the king's tent as a defense against the shot that whistled night and day. Charles noticed the proceeding and let alone the stacks which protected the others' tents, but made the soldiers immediately tear down all that lay in front of his own. "I am the king of a chess game," he used to say with a smile. "If the Polacks can shoot me, there is an end of the whole."

If he got such a scratch that the blood dripped over his glove, he would hardly give leave to have the wound bandaged. "Pooh, nonsense!" he would say. "Ride ahead!" When the army halted, the time was passed in daring trials of arms. Or the king would take a few horsemen as if for a hunt and ride away from his uneasy generals for days and weeks. When he returned, dripping with mud, not having been out of his clothes, he related calmly and simply how he had been off having a playful bout with the Polacks and had captured a couple of forts. "If I have nine guardsmen with me," he said, "nobody shall stop me from riding where I choose."

A circle of mighty forms closed in around the fire when Charles sat talking there in the even-

The Charles Men

ing as he thawed the ice out of his clothes. "Måns Lurifax, what's new?" he used to ask, laying his hand on Stenbock's shoulder. Then the shadowy figures would begin to twitch their cloaks and laugh, for though Stenbock was short in stature so that he stood there like a little juniper between pines, he was never the man who had to search for a merry answer. He would declaim verses which he had written or display a troll which he had just carved with his clasp-knife. With equal versatility he could gather military supplies or lead a regiment. The tall and dignified Rehnsköld would make a courtly bow; but silent and self-contained, as though a trifle mistrustful, there stood a few steps further away a warrior with a great crooked nose, who constantly took snuff. This was Lewenhaupt. He was never flurried. If the enemy approached, he took his pinch of snuff and quietly commanded "March!" Many a sharp skirmish had begun with a rap on yonder snuff-box. Harder was the lot of His Excellency, Secretary Piper, who came galloping up in the midst of the field in his sleeping-gown and great wig with a diamond ring on his finger. His duty was to preach cunning statecraft to a king who could endure no intrigues but dreamed only of war and soldiers.

Deftly would His Excellency weave his nets,

Swedish Chieftains

merely to have them torn to shreds. "Peace," ejaculated the nineteen-year-old monarch with lowering forehead, "peace with a faithless prince who would only fall on me from the rear! No, Your Excellency. Let the Polacks first be made to harness horses to August's traveling-coach and choose another king."

There was at the time a notorious countess, who had been August's sweetheart and was named Aurora Königsmark. "The obstinate youth will not be able to withstand my beauty," thought she, "if I humble myself and beg him to make peace." One day she stopped her carriage on the road just as Charles came riding by. When she saw him approach, she dismounted, took her silver-brocaded skirt in both hands, and bowed ever deeper and deeper in the mud. Aurora suggests the flush of dawn, and she was fair as morning's flush with her black hair and the carmine paint on her cheeks. But the king raised his hat with a civil bow, gave his horse the spurs, and left the enraged beauty standing there.

Onward he led his gallant men through the deep woods, where sharp-shooters lurked in every thicket. The soldiers began to believe that bullets turned aside in the air from before his brow, since they never slew him. To him it was but a moment's battle-play to capture cities and for-

The Charles Men

tresses. When he came to Cracow, he found Stenbock in front of the barred gates. The outer door was of wood, the inner of iron. "Haven't you got in yet?" he asked impatiently. Stenbock was just conferring with the burgomaster, who stood above the gate, raising his hands and vowing by all the saints that the keys had been lost. "Open, you rascally dogs!" shouted Charles in broad Swedish dialect, but this was Hebrew to the Polacks. The burgomaster had meanwhile had a handsome horse fetched for anyone who would speak a good word for him to the Swedish king. Charles took the horse with him to the gate, banged on it and ordered the watch in French to open at once for the burgomaster's horse. Filled with curiosity, they opened a trifle, but what they saw before their eyes was suns and stars, for the Swedes struck them in the face and opened the gate in a twinkling. Charles had but a few hundred men and had strictly forbidden them to fire a single shot, so that the other folk in the city might not take alarm too soon. The outwitted Poles themselves showed the shortest way into the citadel by taking to their heels through the streets, while the Swedes ran close behind them knocking them about the ears, till they had conquered the whole of Cracow with only their musket-butts and sticks.

Swedish Chieftains

The years passed, and it was scarred and frost-bitten soldiers who were finally ranged before the church door at Warsaw. Charles took his place at a gallery window inside the church, but his gait was halting, for he had broken his leg on a ride. His hair, brushed back, had thinned, but his features had hardened, and the assembled Poles looked up at the window in cowed silence. His great hour of victory was come, and these people had to obey him and crown a new king in place of the deposed August. Young and good-natured, Stanislaw Leszczyński, the newly-chosen monarch, advanced between the columns and bent his head before the open window. There he beheld the man who had given him everything, not only regal authority but even the gold crown on his head, the sceptre in his hand and the mantle on his shoulders.

THE INNUMERABLE HORDES

Hundreds of miles away, in the meantime Tsar Peter drove ceaselessly about his realm, gathering and training his soldiers. The Charles Men were far away, and westward by the sea his Muscovites were settled as governors of the Swedish provinces. On their former pasture ground by the Neva rose gradually behind scaffolding a new mausoleum dedicated to new tsars and the future city of St. Petersburg. When Peter heard of the

The Charles Men

Polish coronation, he laughed disdainfully. Amid drinking and music he had his court fool brought and crowned derisively king of Sweden. He was the smallest king Sweden had ever had, except those from the nursery, and assuredly the most tipsy and garrulous, but there he had to stand, such as he was.

"When the right day comes, I'll teach the Russian green-jackets to hop," thought Charles, as he led his army ever further through the wilderness, where the elk and aurochs were still free to range. The soldiers went about thrusting their swords into the ground to discover where the peasants had buried their provisions. When it was cold, they noted that the frost melted first on the earth above such hiding-places. Sometimes they were so hungry that they stood and grazed on branches of trees like horses. In many districts the people had never before seen an army but were roused in astonishment from their innocent state of peace.

Soon August heard the Swedish drums rumble in his ancestral country of Saxony, where he once more had to sign that he renounced forever his claim to the Polish crown.

Here Charles let his weary and ragged soldiers have a thorough rest while he provided them with new and handsome uniforms. Bands of volun-

Swedish Chieftains

teers gathered continually under his banners to follow him in his final conflict with the Muscovites. With almost superstitious awe they gazed at the famous hero who went about bashfully and laconically in his soiled blue uniform amid the silken-clad and bediamonded ambassadors and princes. "Remember I have not come to drive bargains," he said, and demanded no other reward of victory than that some persecuted Lutherans should have their churches re-opened.

When the army went off, many a good Saxon stood at the door with his wife waving farewell to the Swedish soldier who had lived under their lowly roof, helped them to dig in their garden, and been their friend. The simple folk did not inquire in their hearts about the quarrels of the great. And many a Charles Man walked in silent thought, longing that the way should turn back to the north. Instead it led off into regions ever more unfamiliar.

The storms of winter began to roar, and birds fell dead on the drifts. For a hundred years no such season had devastated the land. The dignified uniforms from Saxony were already worn out, and many of the men had to throw away their dilapidated boots and wrap their feet in sheepskins. They rushed before the cold in wild flight to get a roof above their heads. When the

The Charles Men

baggage-wagons drove together and were fastened at the gate of the town where they sought shelter, the men crept between the wheels on the street. But thousands could not push into the town and had to stay outside in the snowdrifts all the terrible night. Of course when one of the soldiers sat down exhausted, his spine would break with a crack like a pistol-shot and he would be stone dead. Finally the dawn would glimmer again, but some of the men would stand frozen to death against the tree trunks, their heads sunken like sleeping sentries. Ice-covered riders sat their horses motionless without answering when they were called, for they were dead, and their fingers had to be cut off to loosen them from the bridle. It was impossible to break the earth, so the bodies were pulled into ditches and cellars. Those who succeeded in entering the town found heaps of ashes instead of dwellings, and the few houses that remained were so crowded that the sick had hardly room to lie down. Chaplains went about giving the last sacrament in brandy, and wails of agony were heard from the doorways where surgeons threw into the street the severed feet and hands which had been amputated.

Christmas Eve came, but no Christmas festivities, and the unfortunate cripples had scarcely a truss of straw under their heads. Yet at times

Swedish Chieftains

a few voices would take up one of the old well-known Swedish Hymns. Then all lamentation would cease and change again for a time into unconquerable faith.

No one murmured aloud, but two by two the generals would stand whispering. More silent and mysterious than ever, Charles rejected their counsel. Sleep deserted him, so that by night he rose from his bed and sat brooding without finding any answer. His game of dauntless youth had gradually led him on to a black precipice. His head had become wholly bald, so that he had to wear a fur cap as protection against the cold, and his compressed lips softened only when he rode up to the sick to console them with a few vigorous words. Those who could neither ride nor walk were now bedded in wagons, the drums rolled, and on went the pilgrimage to the desolate rim of the steppes where Tsar Peter awaited them in his fortified camp at Poltava. There the question was one of victory or annihilation.

The king always went where the bullets whined thickest and challenged death every moment. An attendant noticed once that blood was trickling from his boot. Charles paid no further attention than to say quietly, "I'll have the bullet cut out so it may whistle back." For an hour more he continued his ride over the battlefield. The

The Charles Men

Swedes were going about filling their pockets with spent Russian bullets, as their own were exhausted. Outside their tents the officers sat by small heaps of embers making bullets of their own pewter plates, and their expression was gloomy. Patience was exhausted. They were at discord, irritable, without their former urge to do their duty to the utmost. Charles himself was the only one who appeared confident. When he came back to his tent, the boot had to be split away around his swollen foot. The surgeon, seeing that the ball had entered his heel and bored its way to the toes, stood with his knife, hesitating, when he had to take out the splinters of bone. "Cut ahead, cut ahead! It doesn't hurt," urged the king, holding out the foot. When the wound later grew enflamed, he himself took the scissors and cut away the blackened flesh. Summer heat now scorched its way through the narrow tent-space, and to make the time pass during his suffering, his steward, the faithful Hultman, sat by his bed and related sagas of war.

But the battle had to be fought. In the evening dusk before Sunday the twenty-seventh of June, 1709, the army marched out on the field with folded banners and without music; and the king's litter was set in a grove a little in front of the Guards. From the plain the enemy could be

Swedish Chieftains

heard hammering at their palisades. The once-victorious Charles Men had now so little power that they could take along only four field-pieces to the engagement. Many of the scarred veterans were seized with physical fear and vainly offered a ducat for a drink of brandy. The dark air was heavy and oppressive. The horses stood saddled, and the men had their muskets and carbines at their sides. The generals lay down a while in their cloaks around the litter, and Piper sat on a drum with his back against a tree. The king's hat lay on his knee, and the coverlet was wrapped about his bandaged foot. By the light of a passing torch it seemed that he slept, and his fever-wasted and emaciated face was more rigid and narrow even than before.

The rest was short. Long before daylight all were again in motion, and the king seized his sword. Because of the king's illness the command devolved upon Rehnsköld, but it could be guessed from his violent words that there was discord among the generals. In front of the army the battlefield lay in the light of sunrise, burnt over and black as cinders, without the smallest flower or blade of grass. A cavalryman in red galloped out of the tsar's camp and discharged a pistol. Thereupon the Russians, who were four times as many as the Swedes, sounded all their drums, and

The Charles Men

upon the earthworks appeared countless hordes of soldiers with banners and artillery. The music of the Swedes answered along all their regiments.

With whistling blows the Charles Men stormed forward against the first entrenchments. The Russians began to yield and flee, and within their camp the disturbance grew so great that the women harnessed horses to the baggage-wagons. But the tsarina herself, a woman of the people with deep bosom and white forehead, still went about with almost haughty tranquillity, carrying a canteen of water for the wounded. Her name was Katarina, and there was a tale* that she was to have been the poor but lovely wife of a Swedish dragoon, before she was carried off from Livonia in a raid and taken to the tsar. His hat pierced by a bullet, Peter hurried along his lines on a white charger. He then noticed that the pursuing Swedes suddenly came to a halt, troop after troop. One of their squadrons had been surrounded, and in the confusion the unfortunate command flew to the others that they should stand and wait. The tsar comprehended what this delay, so unusual with the Swedes, meant for him, and like a springtide the whole Muscovite army immediately billowed out of the camp.

Powerless and fettered by his wound, Charles

*) "Captured" in *The Charles Men*, SCANDINAVIAN CLASSICS XV.

Swedish Chieftains

lay on the litter. It was so shot to pieces that Hultman had to mend it with twisted halter-straps. The litter was hung between two horses in such a way that one went in front of it and the other behind. But the horses fell. Time after time the saddles had to be unbuckled and laid on new horses. The sun was hot, and the king drank a little marsh water which Hultman filtered into a glass. He then sat up, raised his sword and ordered Rehnsköld to send the troops forward.

The field badge was straw on the hat, and through the din of shot and drums sounded the war-cry, "God with us! God with us!" In the turmoil there would be meetings of old war comrades or near relatives, who had sat merrily at home in the old days at wedding or christening, and they would call out to one another a last salutation. Where there was more space, captains, lieutenants and ensigns marched before their battalions, pale as death, in time to the music, as if they were going on parade to the old palace of the Three Crowns; but the soldiers clenched their hands over their empty cartridge-boxes.

In front of the Nyland regiment Colonel Torstenson fell dead. In a thicket behind the Scanian Dragoons reeled Captain Horn, badly wounded in the right leg, while his faithful attendant,

The Charles Men

Daniel Lidbom, supported him and dried his forehead. In front of the Kalmar regiment their colonel sank to earth, pierced through the heart, and around him lay half the under officers and half the men as a hero's guard. The Jönköping regiment carried off with them their wounded commander. Colonel Ulvsparre, who led the West Gothlanders, fell with hands pressed to his heart; and his major, the dauntless Sven Lagerberg, fell backwards, struck by a bullet. The enemy's entire army passed over him; he heard the horses and the cannon-carriages; he was trampled and kicked and rolled in ashes and dust among stiffening corpses and moaning wounded men, till a wounded dragoon finally took him on his horse and mercifully conducted him to a wagon.

The army of the Charles Men was rent asunder and devoted to death or captivity. The old torn banners were still fluttering in goodly numbers over the sea of men, but they wavered and tottered, they were ripped and shattered, and finally one by one they sank and disappeared. "Stand, boys, stand!" shouted the officers, while the soldiers fell over one another, so that from corpses, rags of clothing, sod and sand arose small mounds, which served the living as a breast-work. Whistling grapeshot, bullets and explod-

Swedish Chieftains

ing canister rained over the fighting and the dead, till the air was so saturated with dust and smoke that men could see only a horse's length in front of them.

Then the troops began to waver. Under the rising smoke-clouds they saw the king, who lay on the ground amid fallen guardsmen and attendants with his injured foot raised on the edge of his litter. "Swedes, Swedes!" he cried to the fleeing soldiers to stop them. He had not the strength to raise himself, but the men lifted him on their crossed pikes. At first there were over twenty bearers, but they fell, shot dead, until only three were left. Then Major Wolffelt took him on his horse, and straight way fell himself under the weapons of the Cossacks. The king's foot, which was laid over the horse's neck, bled violently, and the bandage was dragged in the ashes. A cannonball from the entrenchments struck off the horse's leg, but Guardsman Gierta lifted the king upon his steed and, himself wounded, mounted the three-legged horse. The cavalrymen formed a circle around the king, but behind them on the battlefield the army of the tsar advanced to take possession of their land and, over the bodies of the Charles Men, to dedicate their empire to the future. Nearer and nearer could be heard a deep and sinister-sound-

The Charles Men

ing hymn. Slowly, step by step, as in a funeral procession, between swinging censers, exalted high over the heads of these many thousands, was borne the mighty standard. On its cloth was painted the tsar's ancestral tree, surrounded by saints, and above, under the Trinity, was his own likeness.

The Swedish fugitives gathered by the baggage train around the king, who sat in a wagon. He asked the Dalecarlians about their colonel, but he had been shot. He looked about for Rehnsköld and Piper, but they were captured. Then he bade the men raise their flags defiantly and let the music strike up, while he marched down toward the Dnieper with the few shadow-like squadrons of his hitherto unconquered army.

By two o'clock the last volleys had been fired, whereupon quiet spread over the battlefield. Homesteads and mills stood burned, trees shot asunder, and the fallen heroes lay with eyes wide open, though dust and ashes were blown over them, as if they stared back from another world on the years that had gone by. A few captured chaplains and soldiers roamed about seeking their fellow-countrymen. Sometimes they opened a shallow grave, over which in the language of their distant home-land they whispered the words of burial into the dusk of the June evening. The

Swedish Chieftains

grave was afterwards closed again, to be gradually overgrown with sedge grass and rough thistles. These have rustled through the centuries since to the winds of the steppes on that gloomy expanse of marsh-land called by the Russians the Swedes' Cemetery.

FREDRIKSHALL

From Poltava Charles led the remnant of his faithful veterans into Turkey, where they built the miniature town of Caropolis and lingered on for four years, always hoping to rouse the Turks to war against Russia. The Turks, however, wearied of their impatience and, overwhelming the little garrison, made the king virtually their prisoner. He was then allowed to escape and after fifteen years' absence at last found himself once more on his native soil. Unable to admit defeat, he soon involved his long-suffering people in another conflict, this time for the conquest of Norway. At the suggestion of Görtz, his financial adviser, he sought to raise the necessary funds by coining fiat money.

One November day several detachments of troops made a halt in a mountain pass, and though the clock only pointed to three, twilight prevailed. Tanned by the sun of the steppes and with a Turkish tobacco pouch at his breast, many a veteran officer wondered at the wintry realm

The Charles Men

into whose wooded wilderness the army now marched to new adventures.

It was snowing, and far below the ravine the sun cast a yellow light over the stunted woods and overhanging crags of the mountain wall.

An army of pallid fifteen-year-olds, of half-grown boys, stood with their weapons in the drift.

The little West Gothlanders with their sharp noses and shifting eyes whispered to one another: "The king will probably say that if we don't want to starve, we can dig food from the Norway mountains."

"We may as well dig then," answered the Smålanders in mournful, long-drawn accents.

But at this moment all swords flew from their scabbards, muskets were presented, and drums thundered. In the gleam of the mountain range strode forward the tall, magnified shadow of a limping man, with a round fur-cap on his head and a gnarled stick in his hand.

It was the king.

He walked between the pines, followed by dragoons, who came in a long line with broadswords drawn, leading their horses. He himself was first and tramped the path in the snow. His scarred and compressed features had with the years become darkened by sun and frost, and be-

Swedish Chieftains

tween his eyebrows lay a deep furrow. When he stuck the fur-cap under his arm and answered the salutes of the men in all directions, the snow fell on the bald crown of his head. Gradually the generals collected about him, and the guardsmen cut off a few fir-boughs with their swords and spread them on the ground. The whole time he stood bare-headed in the snow-storm, and the grizzled wisps of hair brushed back along his temples were like a garland of frosted leaves. He ordered the soldiers to stack their muskets and light fires of branches, but the musicians were placed by the cliff-wall with orders to play until sunset.

"These Norway goats are a merry set to butt against," said the king.

Fieldmarshall Mörner answered, "We have just captured some Norwegian sharpshooters, who lay hid in the bushes here to shoot Your Majesty. Shall we string them up?"

"No. Give each of them a ducat for his wasted time and tell them not to bungle in the soldiers' profession any more."

Mörner lowered his voice.

"There are, besides, other more highly-trusted bush-rangers. I have just got a new letter of accusation as to secret conspiracies against your crown and life. If one might believe it, there

The Charles Men

are dangerous enemies standing here even now scarcely five yards away."

"They may stand then, unless they choose to sit. War days are no time to investigate."

Mörner stepped near to the king and whispered behind his hat, "The men are starving."

"A full soldier is slow at his duty."

With these words the king put on the fur-cap, turned up his cape-collar and laid himself down calmly to sleep on the fir-boughs, as if no enemy existed in the world.

Above Fredrikshall the fortress of Fredriksten guarded the entrance to Norway like a huge bear. When the king arrived there he had a hut of boards built for himself by the trenches on a ridge in front of the fort; and thither a bed, table, and chair were brought.

He surveyed the heavens from time to time and searched out the constellations he knew, but when the mist was spread and darkness fell deeper, he sometimes shut his eyes and counted on his fingers: "Three hundred, three hundred and eighty-five, ninety, ninety-four, four hundred thousand riksdalers. Will Görtz really be able to collect as much by December? How, indeed, can the army be kept up otherwise?" He wanted to hold the Swedes together to the last, even if house and foundation should burn. Severity he

Swedish Chieftains

had commanded, never conscious dishonesty. The matter was now to conquer the fortress of Fredriksten, which, standing before him on the mountain ridge with its gray walls and pointed battlements, barred the road up to Norway. Had they not already taken the outwork of Gyldenlöve with sword in hand?

With sword in hand! He shut his eyes, as he used often to do when he was unseen, and softly repeated the words: "They think that I tempt Thee, O eternal, wondrous God, Holy Spirit, my delight, my joy, my refreshment! They ever say: 'Stop half-way, where we stand, otherwise you are presumptuous; sit down when we grow weary, otherwise we shall no longer call you our Gideon.' Before Thee I humble myself in my need—I, a contrite sinner. Thou art the arbiter."

On the first Sunday in Advent the king mounted his horse and rode down through the mist to the miller's cottage at Tistedal. He was heavy at heart and to overcome his melancholy sat on a bench by the fire and looked over his papers.

"Answer me frankly!" he said after a short silence to Fieldmarshall Mörner. "On how many may I still depend? I don't mean in an engagement, but if everything goes against us?"

"Must I answer? Is it a command?"

The Charles Men

"Yes. On how many may I still depend?"

"On none."

The drums rumbled in front of the cottage, where the soldiers were marching up for divine service, and Hultman, entering, said; "I have to inform you humbly that morning service is now to begin. The text for the day treats on our Lord Jesus Christ's entry into Jerusalem."

The king now washed off all the grime from his face and hands, and put on brand new clothes of blue broadcloth and new yellow gloves of elkskin. Hultman powdered his hair so that it became white as an old man's, and with bared head he stepped out among the soldiers.

The men, who were accustomed to love his juniper staff and stained uniform, hardly recognized him.

He spent all day in the camp, and only after evensong, when the mist began to descend, did he ride his horse, Engländeren, up the woody ridge to the hut of boards by the trenches.

Commanded by the Frenchman Maigret, the Swedes crawled forward with their spades, rolling faggots and gabions in front of them step by step as a protection against the shot from the fortress. The echo of the enemy's firing thundered in the mountain like the clatter of bolts and bars,

Swedish Chieftains

like the blows of clubs upon iron doors to subterranean dungeons and vaults.

To direct their fire and protect themselves against surprise the garrison set out long stakes with burning hoops of pitch, and the fire-balls that were hurled about cast their sudden light over the crags.

Steps approached. It was the gray-haired Hultman, who in buckle shoes and white stockings, his hat respectfully stuck under his arm, was coming over the rocks amid the whistling bullets. In front of him he bore, covered with a napkin, the pewter bowl which contained the king's supper. As soon as he had come up to the rampart he spread the napkin over his hat and then placed the bowl on top while he offered it to the king, who ate standing and every now and then took his faithful servant by the coat buttons.

"Hultman is beginning to get as stiff in his gait as Brandklippenen was in his last days," he said. "But no one has more faithfully followed me wherever I went, and therefore I nominate him to the place of chief cook. With the years we get ever further away from the good men of old times."

Hultman went his way again through the rain of shot, and the king leaned over the wall with

The Charles Men

his chin supported on his left hand. The moon, which was at the full, now rose large and bright above the pine woods.

Swedish, German, Italian and French officers conversed near in their various languages, planning how they might be able to lure the king down from his exposed position. Maigret, who had also joined them by now, plucked him gently by the cloak and said, "This is no place for Your Majesty. Cannister and musket-balls have no more respect for a king then for the meanest soldier."

It was about nine o'clock at night, when some of the officers standing in the trenches behind the king almost at his heels noticed that his head sank to one side in the collar of his cloak. In consternation they lifted him down and streched him on the frozen ground. A number of soldiers were drawn up in circle around them with burning torches. There lay the king of the Charles Men, motionless and dead, struck in the left temple by a shot. He had clutched his sword-hilt so violently that the blade had been half drawn from the scabbard. The officers with difficulty unclasped the fingers to get out the sword, which he was so reluctant to let go.

That the army might not immediately learn what had happened, they wrapped the king's body

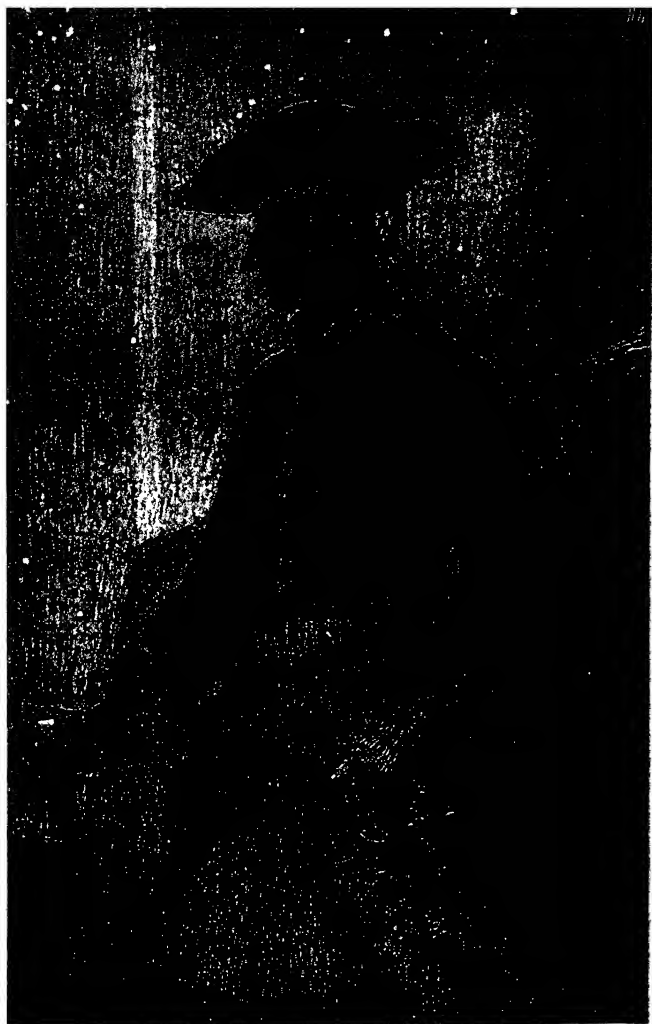
Swedish Chieftains

in two plain soldier's cloaks and set a peruke on his head. Lieutenant Karlberg then summoned twelve soldiers of the guard, who as yet knew nothing. They lifted him on a litter, which stood ever ready for the fallen, and carried him down from the mountain.

Long, tattered clouds hurried over the moon, and the slope was steep and stony. "Who is it that has fallen?" asked the soldiers in an undertone. "It is a gallant officer," answered the lieutenant. Just then one of the men chanced to stumble, and the hat and peruke slipped from the dead man's head so that the moonlight fell on the face with the pierced temple. "The king, our great beloved king!" murmured the bearers, and they were about to set down the litter. The dreaded hero, to whom it had just been whispered that he could no longer rely on anyone, lay there disarmed before their eyes; and old warriors, stained with mud and grime, wrung their rough, frost-bitten hands over his corpse, wailing and groaning; "Our great, our beloved king!"

The lieutenant had to threaten them with hard words that they must be silent and not betray what had happened by their lamenting.

Heavily and slowly they proceeded with their burden. It was nearly midnight when the bier was set down on an open sward among the cot-



Drawing by E. Berggren

CHARLES XII AT FREDRIKSHALL

The Charles Men

tages in the lonely village of Tistedal. After the bearers had got three fiat coins for drink-money, they all went off. The officer remained alone seated upon the pole of the litter in deep thought. Sweden had fallen from her position as a great power with her last king. Volleys still rang in the distance on the wooded ridge, but elsewhere all was hushed, and the mill-wheel down by the river stood motionless. All the panes were dark, and the full moon shone over the grass where a lonely warrior kept watch by his fallen chief.

The hours grew long. It was already getting toward morning, when a couple of servants who had been sent after him, approached and bore the dead man into one of the cabins. Generals and many others began slowly to gather in the doorways and corridor.

"At the instant of his death he half drew his sword," said a warrior with suppressed voice. "But against whom? Did someone come slinking up and fire the shot? What Swede would lend himself to such a deed? Against whom did he draw the sword? I ask. I know it myself now. Against all. Isn't it so that a hero must die? He believed—he believed in the righteousness of his own mission. Such defiance God forgives.—Such defiance even men forgive."

Swedish Chieftains

A HERO'S FUNERAL

The fallen king lay in the midst of waxlights at the royal abode of Karlberg. Like the poorest of soldiers he lay in a clean white shirt of rough material, but on his head with its gray hair rested a laurel wreath. The smile had even in death become fixed on his lips, so that the teeth were slightly visible.

A cushion with spices was laid over the face, and when the coffin was closed, twelve weather-beaten colonels carried it down the steps and set it on the black-draped sledge under a canopy of royal velvet. To the right of the head walked Gierta, and thirty dark and solemn guardsmen surrounded the sledge with raised halberds. Close by among the long black cloaks of the court servants, old Hultman still attended his master, as he had followed him over the snows of the Ukraine and the ash-strewn fields of Poltava. It seemed to him that all that was holy and great in the world had got its death-blow, and when the night-wind roared in the leafless lindens, he recalled the hour when, kneeling outside the barred chamber door, he had heard the king as a boy recite his evening prayer. Everything grew black before him, but at the top of the funeral pall he recognized the royal crown, which he had ever seen wave in the air above the head

The Charles Men

of the king amid the soldiers' coats stained with earth and blood in the trench.

When the funeral procession passed through the gate of Karlberg, all the rush-lights along the Drottninggata and the bridge as far as Riddarholm had already been lighted, but the February night brooded over the city, starless and cloudy. One of the guardsmen on the previous day had dined with Councillor Tessin and had heard many whispers of malcontents, so that he looked about restlessly at the spectators.

"They stand hushed," he thought. "It must needs be so. It is an unfortunate whom we bear to the grave, a solitary, abandoned by God and men—a hero!"

The light shone on folk in windows and church-towers, where the ringers bent forward out of the open shutters. Step by step the train moved onward to the rumble of discordant drums and kettle-drums, and the funeral sledge rocked in the snow. Around Norrbro foamed the black waters of the river. At Riddarholm churchyard, where the hundred-men of the land in the old days had paid fifty marks sterling to get their burial-place under the slabs, the newly-raised life-guard was drawn up. By every seventh man was a dark vacancy with a taper, as if a light was burning there for the fallen and missing. The

Swedish Chieftains

people whispered about it, but softly and subduedly. No one wept, and no one menaced. All the Swedes divined that thousands of years would gaze back at that night. They felt that now they buried half of their own being.

The wondrous church, around which every age has built its various temples to departed great men, shone as at Christmas Morning Service, and from the tower sounded the metal which before had swung above the highest gallery in the Three Crowns.

It no longer seemed to the guardsman that he followed to the grave a solitary and deserted man. He discerned that, when the hero lay fallen and the duel was ended, those who had suffered worst beneath his inflexibility lifted him up on their arms.

When he stepped in through the church door, he was blinded by the five hundred wax candles which, borne by gilded figures, burned in a pyramid in the choir. He no longer remembered that it was a funeral ceremony. He thought that the music played a Christmas song, that it was the Christmas Service, that it was the Midwinter Festival for home, for country, for dead or absent kinsmen. He thought of the fallen, of the prisoners in Siberia, and of all that which had been.

The Charles Men

On the black tablet to the right were described in golden characters the nine years when fortune had attended the Swedes, but on the tablet to the left one might read of the nine years when fortune had continually shrunk away.

Here the last surviving warriors were now assembled.

The courtiers arranged themselves according to their rank behind the illuminated shrine where Magnus Lock-the-barn and Karl Knutsson lay motionless with their sceptres of stone. Hark to the clangor of knightly squadrons and gay tournaments, hark to the mournful murmur of the rushes at Fågelsvik!

The gallant Axel Roos and his friend Åberg, who was now so ill and weak that he supported himself on a crutch, stood on the oldest gravestone of the Vasa race. Behold the hot-headed lords, proud, honor-lusting, well-spoken, quick to threaten and to offer their hands again!

Every slab in the floor, every tile in the wall was illuminated by sagas, as lanterns by their flame. The banner was set on that side of the choir where in the gray past Bo Jonsson Grip had cut down a knight at the very altar, but the crown was set on the other side, where the bones of Torkel Knutsson rested. Hark to the song, hark to the murmur in the wilds of Karelen, where

Swedish Chieftains

the banner of the cross flutters over soothsayers and sorcerers and over the blood-smeared gray-stone images of Jumala!

Along the aisle on both sides the halberds of the guards were pointed at the floor under which the pious father confessor of Saint Birgitta slept. Hail, queen of heaven! Behold the city of Jerusalem, where thy penitent in pilgrim's weeds hears the harp-notes of the angels on high!

The white gleam of the wax candles shone over the darkened, the almost black visages of the warriors, and above in the broken plaster of the roof were red, ominous streaks as of scourge-blows on a human head. They were the old monkish writings,—self-menaces, judgments, scarred upon the foreheads of the Swedes: "Six have been, are, and remain the causes of Sweden's misfortunes: Self-interest, treacherous hate, contempt of the laws, indifference to the common good, short-sighted inclination towards strangers, obstinate envy of fellow-countrymen." The last words glowed blood-red, only the words about contempt of the laws had faded and were almost wholly obliterated. Might it be some day that all the words would be erased?

The candle-light made its way between the black mourning tapestries to the banners and armorial bearings above, to the blood-red horn

The Charles Men

of the Oxenstiernas and the blue lion of the Lewenhaupts. There the dead listened to the flutes and kettledrums. Torstenson remembered when he sat on his litter with his battle chart, and Banér when he rode along the front with his bride, a child who looked down at the pommel of her saddle in fear before the glances of so many men.—And enveloped in that swathing of cloth of gold which women's hands, wet with inconsolable tears, had arranged for the last time, lay their king, with closed eyes, and in the psalms he heard the mild rustle of the summer wind over laurel woods. They all comprehended that to-night a Swedish prince was descending once more to their dwelling-places.

In the darkness before the church, where the treasurer Rafelt scattered among the silent people the memorial coins that had with difficulty been got ready, Cronstedt's field-pieces thundered, and the powder smoke penetrated through the windows.

Thus now was illuminated the hero saga of the Charles Men, and every soul was conscious of a void that nothing could fill. Before the doors the servants already kindled their torches to light home the court to the royal house.

The organ and flutes and kettledrums were now silent. It became so still that the slightest rat-

Swedish Chieftains

tle of a weapon was audible. With harsh and choked voices the warriors raised the last funeral psalm, and slowly, heavily, step by step, the councillors of state bore the coffin to the vault.

The stairway to the tomb of the Charleses descended at the side of the choir. Golden sceptre in hand, with golden crown, golden apple, golden key, golden sword—so accoutred lay the tenth Charles, victorious and mighty. The eleventh lay without adornment. Behold the girls with wooden shoes dancing at Mora, hear the quiet words of law and right and harvest and peace!—Whither did they depart hence, those golden days? Where now were the locked barns?

Oh ye shades of what has long passed away, of what has descended unto the earth, of what sleeps in the starlight! Ye echoes of a saga sung! Do ye hear? Do ye hear who it is that knocks to-night at your dwellings? It is a king—that ye divine. But did ye note the yearning with which he has long been knocking? Saga, he loved it—that which sleeps under the great stars. He longed to become the echo of a sung saga.

Two slabs were lifted by their iron rings, and the grave was closed.

The Charles Men

NOTE

In order to accomplish his purpose of curbing the great nobles, Charles XI has made the power of the Crown well-nigh absolute. Upon his death, in 1697, this power descended to his fifteen-year-old son, who was at once crowned king of Sweden. The enemies of his country thought it an opportune time for attack. Frederik IV, King of Denmark, August, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, and Tsar Peter of Russia formed a coalition against him. The young Swedish king, nothing daunted, took the aggressive. In 1700 he defeated the Danes in Seeland and the Russians at Narva. Then he went against August in Poland and Saxony, where he campaigned for six years. In 1706 he forced August to renounce the throne of Poland. The following year he entered Russia, but was routed at Poltava and fled to Turkey.

This was the signal for Sweden's enemies to go to the attack again. The Danes landed in Scania, but were repulsed by Magnus Stenbock. The Russians seized Sweden's Baltic provinces and Finland. In Turkey Charles remained till 1715, when he escaped and came home to Sweden, a lonely fugitive, after an absence of fifteen years. He found that to the number of his enemies had been added the Elector of Hannover, who was also king of England, and the king of Prussia. Inasmuch as Sweden's enemies dominated the sea, Charles made an attack by land on Norway, which was then united with Denmark, but at Fredrikshall he met his death November 30, 1718.

As soon as Charles was dead the leaders of the country agreed that peace must be secured at any cost. A series of disastrous treaties were concluded, by which Sweden lost most of her possessions on the opposite side of the Baltic and large parts of Finland. What remained of Finland was ravaged by the enemy, and Sweden itself was impoverished. Sweden's days as a world power were over.

At Venerable Upsala

IN THE DAYS when Sweden was a world power there lived at Upsala a very learned professor named Olov Rudbeck. With anxious heartbeats did every new student of those days anticipate the rough reception that awaited him when he should be admitted into the circle of the students. It availed not that Rudbeck, when he first arrived as a youngster, had tried to put on a bold appearance in his black broadcloth suit with shining buttons and a sword at his side. He was seized mercilessly and had his face rubbed with soot. He was then dressed in a black cloak and a mask with ass's ears, horns, and boar's tusks, as was the ancient custom. To be convinced of his own stupidity and incapacity he then had to answer on his knees a lot of absurd catch questions. Amid song and dancing he was finally taken by the neck and shaken till the tusks fell out of his mouth. Then the horns and ass's ears, the symbols of his native clownishness, were cut off, salt was laid upon his tongue, and his head was anointed with wine. With that, amid thunderous drumbeats, he was proclaimed a free student.

For a long time, however, Rudbeck had to learn from experience that even a free student did not always make his first steps on a path of roses. He

Venerable Upsala

had ideas of his own and burned with an inquisitive longing to study the interior of the human body. To do this he had to cut up dead folk, which was then called body-ripping. This was much looked down upon, because no one fully understood how much might be discovered through such a process. There was a teacher who was supposed to instruct in that branch, but he preferred to sit behind mysteriously closed window-shutters staring at the small blue flames which danced over the furnace in his laboratory. There he meditated night and day on how to discover something which was spoken of as the philosopher's stone. With that stone he thought he could then change silver into gold and make gold into a liquid which men could drink and thereby obtain eternal health and youth. Neither did the academic apothecary have any real enthusiasm for an acquaintance with corpses. Spectacles on nose, he sat early and late inscribing enigmatical symbols and trying to calculate when the Day of Judgment would come.

Such was the state of things at Upsala. Meanwhile the talented young student Rudbeckius worked unceasingly with knife and scissors. In this way he made such remarkable discoveries about hitherto unknown characteristics in the circulation of the blood, that one fine day Queen Christina appeared at his dissection table with

Swedish Chieftains

her court to hear him lecture. Energetic, agreeable and eloquent, he stood there with his slender warrior-like figure before the gifted mother of the country describing his discoveries. From that hour his fortune was made, and gradually with the years he became the spiritual chieftain of the learned.

He established a botanical garden with rare flowers, though at first hardly more than two or three students could be got to take up the study of herbs. Their comrades laughed at them and called them grass-readers. Rudbeck also deciphered runic stones and built workshops for the study of mechanics. He executed models of boats that went by means of wheels. He led the songs of the students, taught them to play instruments, and trained them in riding and fencing. When his glance passed over the plain to the sepulchral mounds of Old Upsala, he was filled with strange thoughts. The Greeks had invented a legend about a wonderland, which was supposed to have flourished long ago far out in the sea, and which they called Atlantis. Without hesitation he struck upon the conjecture that by this they must have meant far-off Sweden, the abode of just and valiant heroes, where the air was fresh and the woods filled with game. He investigated the black soil on the barrows and believed he had

Venerable Upsala

found that they were older than the Deluge. Uppland, was not that the same name as Atland? The sons of the North, he maintained, had built the ancient Troy of the Greek poets before Abraham migrated to Egypt. The hundred-gated Tebe of the Egyptians had at first had the purely Swedish name of Tå-by, Town of the Gates, since *tå* in Swedish dialect means gate or door. He ransacked the writings of the ancients and thought that everywhere he found confirmations. Wine, which was told of in the Greek stories, was mead and grape juice, elephants were moose. All this preposterous, high-flown dream he collected into a giant work which was called *Atlantikan*, and the flattered and enraptured Swedes kept it on their tables beside the Bible.

Before Rudbeck had been able to print the continuation of his work, Upsala was awakened one spring night by alarm drums and the tocsin. A furious fire drove its flames at last to the *Gustavianum*, the building which sheltered the precious library of the university. Grizzled but still sound of body, old Rudbeck mounted up in the rain of sparks on the smoking wooden roof and with his commanding voice led the men with the fire engines. In vain was it shouted that his own house had been reached by the fire. He stood there unflinchingly till the *Gustavianum* and the

Swedish Chieftains

cathedral were saved. On the site of his burned house whirled the ashes of his unpublished works, leaving later times to ponder whether a half truth may have lurked in his legend about the original home of the human race in the Northland.

This great and widely-renowned chieftain of learning had lain in his grave a generation, when Linnaeus with his knapsack on his back came roaming to Upsala. He pulled his hat down tightly and looked over the plain, where a cloud-wall rose yellow and heavy, and a jagged ray of lightning gleamed across the barrows. It was in such an ancient region that, in the warlike days of the Charles Men, Atlantikan could be imagined, but now the legend was forgotten. Gentler times had dawned, and the new arrival no longer needed to kneel in a mask with ass's ears. But on the streets youthful vitality rippled as gaily as before, and new hopes budded and sprouted. Nevertheless the poor student from Stenbrohult had to undergo many ordeals. He often crept starving to his meagre bed. When he woke in the middle of the night, his stomach cried out, though he had just been dreaming vividly of beer soup and pickled perch. He then put on his threadbare clothes and hastened out to dispel the worst of his hunger. Here and there a pane jingled when

Venerable Upsala

some jolly tippler tried to start a row. "Stop there, you philistine!" they shouted to him, thinking him some home-going citizen, and swords would be drawn. But when they got to see that it was a student like themselves and recognized who he was, they shrugged their shoulders and grumbled, "Good morning, grass-reader! Are you off to pick herbs again like a quack or an old woman?"

It was indeed his most delightful occupation to gather herbs. One of the city's learned fathers saw with surprise that the ragged student stood one April day in Rudbeck's desolate and dilapidated botanical garden, examining flower after flower with the greatest care. After having questioned the lad in botany a while, the professor took him home with him. Happier days now began for Linnaeus in his thirst for knowledge. Soon he had hundreds of listeners about him as he proceeded through the garden walks and, fresh as intoxicating sunny weather, lectured on the reproduction and life of the flowers.

He was no Swedish Jack of all trades, who fumbled about at random hither and thither, but a man who penetrated ever more deeply into the subject which was nearest his heart. He was therefore more victorious than most. It was

Swedish Chieftains

a real trip of discovery when he finally wandered as far as the snow peaks of Lapland, recording whatever he observed even to smallest details which to others had seemed unimportant. In Holland he at last published his learned book, which broke new trails through the wilderness of nature. And yet sometimes in moments of relaxation amid his foreign friends he would put on his shaggy Lapland garments and beat on his Lapp drum. Neither gold, fame, nor the Dutch bulbs which sent their perfume from the fields into his room could make him linger. Homeward he needs must go to wed his sweetheart and continue his rambles under the pines and birches.

In the groves by the border of Upsala Plain the woodland horn and drum resounded early in the spring mornings. It was the young students, who with flowers in their hats, Linnaeus and a banner at the head, were going out into the country to botanize. Seldom too were lacking older disciples from all corners of Europe, and sunburnt men who had returned from distant expeditions of research. At his place, Hammarby, the master had built a museum for his collections, and there his friends and chosen pupils encamped late in the evening in the fresh grass. Dressed in a short red sleeping-gown and green cap, his long pipe in his hand, he stood at the open door

Venerable Upsala

and talked to them of his flowers and minerals or of the glittering insects of the air. Those were unforgettable hours of light and of humble reverence, when his own words fluttered about in sportive and witty intoxication like golden-winged bees and dragonflies.

He was not content if he did not perceive that all were really happy. If a hurdygurdy droned from one of the neighboring threshing-floors, he liked to go there to watch the dancing or join in a polka himself, even when his hair was white.

He was no longer called Linnaeus, since he had been made a noble with the name of von Linné. But in his coat of arms he set neither an eagle nor a bloodthirsty lion, neither a sword nor a cannon, as others did. The egg was the beginning of everything, and Karl von Linné put on his shield simply an egg. Such was the crest of the flower king in the new days of peaceful blossoming.

NOTE

Olof Rudbeck was born in 1630 and died in 1702. His discovery of the lymphatic ducts was the first great scientific achievement by a Swede. Kristofer Polhem, the first Swedish inventor, was born in 1661 and died in 1751. Among his most important contributions are mentioned his invention of machines used in the metal industry and his application of water power to mining. Carl von Linné, the world-renowned botanist, was made professor at Upsala in 1741.

A King of the Arts

MOTHER AND SON

FAR OUT in the park of Drotningholm, where nature was comparatively wild and untouched, lay a marsh. The court seldom roamed so far except once in a while to botanize after the manner of Professor Linné. With the greatest secrecy King Adolf Fredrik had this marsh filled in with earth. One fine summer day all the cadets were ordered to encamp in the palace orchard, where they took their ease and ate so many gooseberries that every corner of their stomachs was filled tight. What was afoot? That was something to conjecture. Let him explain who can.

The well-meaning Adolf Fredrik had knocked the bottom out of three casks of gold in order, on the queen's name-day, to give her a surprise without precedent. His queen was none other than Lovisa Ulrika, sister to Frederick the Great of Prussia, who after an unsuccessful conspiracy to make her husband as absolute a monarch as her brother, had been banished from the palace at Stockholm.

One bright night the cadets saw a remarkable flotilla approaching on the Mälar. It consisted of many barges, on which were enthroned three

King of Arts

small Chinese castles built surreptitiously at the artillery barracks in Stockholm. The next thing was to float up this swimming miniature of the Celestial Empire to the reclaimed marsh and then for the cadets to learn how to act like Chinamen. When on her name-day Lovisa Ulrika glided astonished from her carriage, there stood a whole youthful army of Chinese with tinkling music, and flags with suns and dragons. Dressed as a mandarin, Crown Prince Gustaf delivered to her on a purple cushion the gilded keys of the palace.

This new China became a charming nook among the leafy shade-trees. The queen had the palace altered and embellished, and moved into it every summer with her books and embroidery. There Adolf Fredrik might peacefully hang his wig on a nail and make the wheel of his lathe whirr, as had always been his favorite practice. If they wished to sit down of an evening with their favorite attendants and not be disturbed by inquisitive lackeys, there was a hall where a table, completely set, came up through a trapdoor. One might have thought that the whole palace, just as it stood, had been brought home on some East Indiaman. Dragon's heads gaped from under balconies. Bells swayed in the wind along the metallic-green, scrolled roof. Before the mir-

Swedish Chieftains

rors in the rooms sat porcelain Chinese dolls, which could nod their heads in welcome. And amid all the little lacquer tables and wardrobes with carved bits of ivory and teacups there was a whole tiny Chinese marionette theatre to look at.

But no palace doors could shut out the storms of the time, and no sentries, no matter how splendidly they presented arms with their tallowed mustaches and plaited hair. Angry and weary, the king came from the continual bickerings at the council board, and only became genial and contented again after he had tinkered a while among his lathe tools. To console himself he sat down one day and ate oysters, then sauerkraut, and finally great fresh hot cross buns with almond icing and boiling hot milk. But that was too much. That day Adolf Fredrik died.

"Welcome, Gustav III!" nodded all the porcelain sages of China. "We see now that there is not to be any sleep for us, but that a new sun is rising." And the Swedes soon noted the same fact. Foreign ambassadors sat in Stockholm like mighty big-wigs and governed the realm by means of their bribes. Was that to be? Was it freedom that the Swedes had to obey the commands of the great Empress Catharine in St. Petersburg? No. Like the loveliest spring, like a

King of Arts

budding St. Eriksmas time, had freedom come and clad the land in verdure; but weeds had followed the sowing. So it is with all sowing. The young noblemen began to weary of hanging about the stairways of counts and barons, the official chiefs, to ask employment or a little pecuniary help.

"Hark, what a noise there is on the streets! It is a hot day in August too. What has happened?"—Ask anybody in the throng on the Norrbro. Ask the spice seller who stands hurrahing there. "Come, let me have a pinch of snuff, my good man! Is it true that the king has made a speech to the guard at the palace and arrested the royal councillors?" "Aye, to be sure it's true. Look yourself where the palace gates are opening!"

Young and bold, though still pale with excitement, Gustav came riding forward in front of his guard with drawn sword. He had a white handkerchief knotted about his arm as a badge to distinguish all who were of his persuasion. There was a searching in pockets for white handkerchiefs, since a number of the by-standers wished also to wear the white battle token. The old factions of the Hats and Caps was over. Even the Estates shouted assent, when the king

Swedish Chieftains

finally asked in the hall of the riksdag that they should give him the legal right to greater power.

What his mother had failed to bring about in the dark of night, he had accomplished in open day. Ever since he had sat on her knees as a little child, he had heard her speak longingly of power, power. Now it was won, but for himself alone.

He hastened to establish wise laws, abolishing revenge and severe penalties. The white Horse, the Rose Chamber and all similar places of torture were doomed to destruction. Around him alone thronged the common people, calling him with jubilations their liberator, and with his mother he never took counsel. Her money box remained empty, and she had to deliver to him both Drottningholm and her magic palace of China, while she herself had to spend her summers at lonely Svartsjö. From the Stockholm wharves came packing-boxes, and when these were opened and the straw cleared away, the most elegant marble statues were revealed. But it was about him in his halls that they were set up. How different from the time when all the notables gathered around to pay court to Lovisa Ulrica! He had been her pride, her darling, whom she had indulged and accustomed to pomp and vanity. She had loved him best among her three sons because he was the most brilliant. But now came

King of Arts

a terrible change in that her heart froze and she began to hate her own son. There was a misunderstanding between them so that neither trusted the other's word, and he spoke to her only of his festivities.

His dream was to rule with enlightened magnanimity over a happy people, who like himself loved and revered Sweden and enjoyed themselves. A bright rosy radiance trembled over all of Stockholm. On the Mälar glided leaf-clad pinnacles, and many convivial brotherhoods with bowls, glasses, and streamers plashed out to the lovely islands. Clamorous was the ball at the inn of Klas on the corner. The flooring groaned and shook until even the birch branches in the embrasures danced. Hold the horns and trumpets out of the window or our ear-drums will burst! Remember that barons and countesses are swinging through the mazes of the minuet!

And Drotningholm? If a king of spades was fastened in the morning on the hall of the guards, the king feasted that day at the palace. But if it was a king of hearts, the board was spread at China. Then would come winter and snow, when the gilded sledge of the king sped behind galloping horses to ancient, red-walled Gripsholm.

Here the weather-vanes shrieked, and the

Swedish Chieftains

lighted windows were banged now and then by the wing-beat of some owl. Here were knightly halls and dark retreats, where a gay wag might hide and, as a lady-in-waiting tripped past, might utter a blood-curdling growl that would cause her to faint. Night was made into day. There were court ladies who had not seen a sunrise in years. When they peeped out between their curtains to see if it was time to get up, the yellow gleam on the carpet was often the last goodnight of a winter day. Then it was time to be combed and powdered. At last they hurried off, their trains on their arms, through the cold, eerie corridors of the garret past a prison cell, where it was said that Erik XIV had worn the planking with his steps. Off in the tower, where of old the Vasa kings had confessed and listened to long, dry sermons against worldly frivolity, there was now a theatre. Candles gleamed and were multiplied in the mirror-covered walls. The benches were dreadfully hard and narrow, but that was part of the fun. The most exalted people of the land squeezed in without a murmur, and sometimes there were guests of even greater renown.

As Charles XII had the Charles Men, so Gustav III stands ever before the memory as surrounded by the Gustavians, the artists. There

King of Arts

came Sergel, fat and self-assured—the man who could so forget himself before an antique statue that he stuck out his fingers toward the king with the words, “Give me some snuff!” Those were strong fingers, often burned by the Roman sun and familiar with the chisel. With them he cut portrait busts, gods, and goddesses out of the hard marble. He was the Roman among the artists. Small and thin, almost hidden by the broad back of the sculptor, stood Kellgren, the poet with the fine eager eyes, who was electric with devotion to all that was true and noble. He was the Swedish Frenchman of the circle. And Leopold, the king’s friend, the poet with the star on his breast, whispered, with clouded brow, a few words in Kellgren’s ear. The words may have been about Thorild, the warrior among the artists, another seer, who constantly gave them cause to sharpen the arrows of their wit.

Who noticed if perhaps Lidner found his way to the castle stairs some evening—and had to turn about? The servants threw the light of their torches on him, and the shadow of his nose became so horribly long that it pointed up to the roof. What he required was money, money. It went as fast as it came. Even a gold watch which the king had bestowed on him he gave in the very castle park to a poor old woman. He was

Swedish Chieftains

the dreamer among the artists. As a boy he had been sleepy and stupid, but in the midst of an hour's reading he had suddenly felt a click inside his head. After that click his mind was released from its drowsiness and began to grow in vigor. Wildly as the trees toss and writhe over graves on an autumn night the poems rushed from his lyre.

But quiet, quiet; the curtain rises! With dainty steps king, princes, and princesses advanced on the boards of the stage and took their part in the play.

Hand-claps pattered, and when they finally died out for the evening, the king sat down with his intimates to their regular festal meal. He himself came as he had appeared on the stage, in armor or clad as the high priest of Jerusalem with a diamond ornament on breast and turban. Good humor and genius played over the circle at the board, and Schröderheim, the Secretary of State, was as ready with repartee as at other times to scrutinize and point at protocols. One evening, too, Bellman came from his oaks in the Djurgård. He was by now skilful and widely known, and Gustav called that he should be admitted. He sat down a little way off in the hall with his lute on his knees and sang. The torch-lights of the Great Bear glimmered in through

King of Arts

the panes, and down in the courtyard the snow lay deep on the cannon which in olden times had been brought home across the Baltic as trophies of victory.

Fluttering light on the table and night outside the window, that suited Gustav's court. When the cold daylight shone into the wardrobes, the silver-brocaded skirts of lace looked like gray hiding places for dust. And the countesses seemed peaked and old as they rang for their maids and began to chatter about masquerades and ballets. They hardly dared wash because of the paint, but often merely dipped their fingers a trifle into a little hand-tub no bigger than a basin. Pettiness and gossip whispered in every corner. Gustav himself went about with a complexion ruined by paint, was affected in manner, and spoke in his own rooms as in a play.

In China Palace is a round apartment which is commonly known as the whispering salon. If anyone in it turns to the wall and whispers, every syllable can be clearly heard by a person at the opposite wall. Here the king sometimes had his desk, where he sat writing his plays, for he too was a poet. He would have liked all his palaces just like that room, so that in his inquisitiveness he might have stood by one wall and listened to what was whispered at the other. If he became

Swedish Chieftains

overwrought with passion, his sister would throw herself on her knees before him, and the dukes his brothers would faint each in a different direction with their cologne-bottles in their hands. Yet if his thoughts then could be turned to something great and exalted, he was quickly appeased and soon restored to a noble magnanimity. When he later passed through the door into the park, with a slightly indolent step, as was his wont, powdered, in a dark costume with bright red facings, his femininely delicate hand outstretched, —he was again the magician, the king of enchantment.

THE MASQUERADE

Gustav III had reigned over twenty years amid the acclaim of the populace and the growing discontent of the nobles. The humiliation of Poltava had been lightened by a naval victory over the Russians at Svensksund. It was about the year 1791 that there appeared among the tavern patrons of Stockholm a man of somewhat over thirty, who had few acquaintances. He was a certain Captain Anckarström. Newly migrated from the country as he was, he sat silent for the most part and listened to the others talking politics. If he got a cuff in the jostle, he gave it back with interest. Thrifty and quiet, he ordered his simple meal and went his way.

King of Arts

In figure he was short, though strong and wiry, and his face was ruddy and fresh, but hard-featured. The deep furrows by the mouth told of worry and low spirits. He was poor, for he had left the service and had fared badly in farming. He thought that while he was awaiting an improvement in his affairs he might as well live in Stockholm with his needy family.

In the house where he rented rooms he met through a couple of ladies their brother-in-law Count Horn, and the two gentlemen discussed with one another the questions of the day. Both grew heated when the talk turned to the discontent in the land, and the count would sum up on his fingers all the faults of the king and the dangers of autocracy. At last he adopted one of Anckarström's little daughters and invited the father to his countryplace.

The unlucky day when Anckarström went thither through the trampled snow was a Sunday early in the year 1792. It was said that every tree of the leafless avenue from the water to the house was so rare that it had cost a Holland ducat. There were other tales too for such as chose to hear. It was said that the place had belonged to Göran Persson, who had died on the wheel, and that ever since then misfortune had followed the various owners. But to that the

Swedish Chieftains

poverty-stricken captain gave no thought. Pleased at being asked to the comfortable residence of the count, he stamped off the snow and was soon at table with his host and a very tall, very thin Count Ribbing.

"Liberty is lost," asserted Ribbing, "liberty, in whose worship I was born and suckled, whose very name fires my emotions. For us, for Sweden it is lost since the king made himself an autocrat and drove out the nobles from the Riksdag hall. How can such an indignity be wiped out? The old families no longer set their foot in his palace. He has to put up with young coxcombs and his complacent citizenry. Do not suppose he is indifferent. He suffers from others' coldness."

There was something reserved and controlled in the proud voice. With enthusiastic feeling Horn took his good friend by the arm. Both were young officers who had left the army out of bitterness toward Gustav. "I don't go any more to the Riksdag at Gefle," he declared. "There's no use. It's the favorites that manage things now."

Anckarström broke into the conversation and said, "Something must be done to get rid of Gustav III. As long as he lives, there is nothing to hope."

King of Arts

Ribbing shrugged his shoulders indifferently and replied, "God knows when that may be."

"If I had the chance, I'd be the man to do it," exclaimed Anckarström impetuously—and the word was said.

Horn pointed to Anckarström and said, "There's a real man for you." But Ribbing, who was more cold-blooded, laughed with a disdainful air and looked sceptically at the surly captain without troubling himself to answer.

After a while the countess appeared, and the colloquy ceased. But before the gentlemen parted, they managed to whisper together a couple of times and were agreed on taking revenge. "Out at Haga the king has a guard around him," said Anckarström. "He has long had forebodings. The only chance would be to shoot him at the theatre or during some masquerade."

In the entry, when he brushed off the beautiful white snow a little while since, he hardly thought that he would be going home with such deep thoughts. Even before that he had cherished an old grudge against the king and had considered murdering him. But now the word was said. "I'm an unlucky man who has nothing to lose, and the cause of liberty is now my cause," he kept saying to himself, and a strangely cold and

Swedish Chieftains

sinister calm spread over his soul. Far off in some wood that night stood a snow-covered oak which was soon to be cut down for his beheading block.

With a pistol under his coat he found himself with the counts at the new theatre at the very next performance of the opera. The king, however, sat in his royal box and nothing could be done. Anckarström went home tired, and Horn felt quite satisfied at bottom that the evening had ended so quietly.

In this way Anckarström failed time after time in his grim purpose, at opera performances, masquerades, and the Gefle Riksdag. He never fully knew how many people were initiated into the secret and spun their diverse threads into the mysterious web. Short and vivacious, General Pechlin sat in his house at Blasieholm, spinning away like a spider in its net. But the net was so thin and delicate that no human eye could see it. On the streets the dandies of the day promenaded as before with plume and sword.

The word had been said at all events, and Anckarström could not easily forget it, for the reason that Ribbing had shrugged his shoulders so disparagingly. He met Ribbing one day when the drops from the thawing snow began to splash from the corners of the eaves. "If there is only



Drawing by E. Berggren

GUSTAF III, KING OF ARTS

King of Arts

a masquerade again, it shall be done for sure, let there be many folk or few," said the captain.

On Friday, March 16, a placard was pasted up at the opera house that there was to be a masquerade.

That evening Anckarström ate supper alone with his small children, for his wife was in the country. He then went to his room, which had a separate entrance from the courtyard. The maid went along to pull off his boots as usual, but when she had gone, he placed himself by the bureau, where a tallow candle burned, and took out two small pistols which he had got from Horn and had then had repaired by a gunsmith. This repairing was to cost him dear. He loaded them with an inch of powder, small shot and two bullets, and into one poured some broken tacks. One pistol with cocked trigger he thrust close against his breast, the other he hid in his breast pocket. Horn arrived later. Both dressed themselves in black dominoes and round, black hats, with face masks that left only the eyes visible. On one hand Anckarström took a knife, to which he had glued black velvet to keep it from gleaming.

He started up in fright at a long-drawn cry which sounded from the street below. But he recovered himself when he heard it was only the

Swedish Chieftains

fire-watchman tramping by with his long-handled shears, singing:

"Seven o'clock, and all is well.

May God's almighty and merciful arm

Protect our city from fire's harm!"

Anckarström gave Horn a silent nod and they went out together into the dark. They spoke little, took a roundabout course, and sometimes stopped so as not to arrive too early. Up under a roof shone a little window without curtains. The conspirators cared not who might be living there, but let us hear what the snowflake saw when it stuck to the pane and spread out like a star.

A cold and meagre room with a heap of earth in one corner was the first thing the snowflake saw. To and fro across the floor paced the poet Lidner, clad only in his shirt and with a poet's ecstatic tears on his eyelids. He took a swallow from the flask that stood by the candle and began to recite aloud what he had just written:

"O patron of my verse,

Great Gustaf, pray descend

And ope thy bounteous purse

My sorry state to mend!

O . . ."

"Hush, hush!" interrupted his wife who sat, wretchedly clad, on a bench, where she was plait-

King of Arts

ing the hair of their little girl. "Someone's surely coming up the stairs. I hear coughing."

Lidner sniffed in a little with his great nose and looked suspiciously at the door. It was slowly pushed open, and a tallish man stepped in with a lute under his arm. He had a weak chest, and a moment passed before the tired and gloomy expression on his face brightened to a kindly smile. A button or two was lacking on his red vest, but it appeared that his pockets were full.

"Bellman, Bellman!" exclaimed the bare-legged poet, as he sprang forward to throw his arms about the visitor's neck. But he stopped midway and clasped his hands together in distress. "Dear wife," he lamented, "how can we entertain such an honored guest? There is not so much as a cold pancake to set before him." With a sigh he shuffled over to the heap of earth in the corner and stooped down. "Bellman," he said, "do you know what this is?"

"Can it be your grave that you're making in your own apartment?" asked Bellman, shutting one eye with a waggish air.

"No, dear friend," continued the host, sticking his shirt between his knees. "This is the unfortunate Benkt Lidner's treasury and bank. Here I bury both copper and silver—if only I have any. Then my dear wife and girl can hunt

Swedish Chieftains

out what they need. Dust unto dust." He stuck his fingers into the heap and let it trickle so that the earth rained down as from a grave-digger's shovel. "Empty," he said, "empty, empty!"

When he turned his head he could see Bellman standing by the table and emptying all his pockets. He pulled out tobacco and waffles and crullers and twisted sugar-biscuits. "Look here what I've scraped together for to-night!" he said with deep satisfaction. "Do you know what day to-day is? March the sixteenth. Your birthday, Benkt!"

"And assuredly my last," answered Lidner. "So my sickly body tells me. If I hear aright, neither have you so much time left in this vale of tears. Your breath comes hard already."

Instead of speaking Bellman stripped to the sleeves, though his red vest was no longer of the finest. He sat down on a corner of the table, then tuned and tried the lute which had so often rung to his songs in the midst of applauding crowds. Finally he threw back his head and looked up. His voice had become weak and thin, and he hummed rather than sang:

*"Hark, the bell of midnight shivers!
Moves the hand, the minutes go.
Brother, where yon starlight quivers
Soon our cross will mark the snow.*

King of Arts

*Hushed and bare the park so spacious
Where the rustling silks would pass,
But to Gustav mild and gracious
Drink we now our parting glass!
Gustav, look with heed about you,
Guard yourself from lead and steel.
All men save the poets doubt you;
We are yours in woe and weal.
You were ever one to love us,
Giving coats as well as bays.
Clink for Gustav, patron of us,
Whom with thinning ranks we praise!
Though the chill night spreads above us,
Golden were our springtime days."*

The snowflake saw and heard no more, for now it melted and ran down the pane as a silent tear.

Meanwhile the two sinister night-wanderers had arrived at the opera house. As they mingled in the throng they caught sight of the king through an *oeil-de-boef* to the right. He was in a little narrow box with an oval embrasure just next to the stage. It was still too early to act. Ribbing had arranged as a mark of identification to wear a pair of boots with cuts across the toes, which he had shown the others. They therefore went about among the masks and peeped down at the feet. Soon they met a man

Swedish Chieftains

with the unusual boots they were seeking. Group by group the conspirators gathered, all clad alike in black capes and black hats. Expectantly they took their places below the box, exchanging from time to time a few cautious words.

Within his golden oval sat Gustav with his powdered hair, looking down upon the black flock. He already knew better than they divined that his life was at stake on this night. In a pocket under his waistband was stuck a letter of warning, which an unknown person had caused to be delivered to him at the dinner table a short while before. The large characters were written in lead-pencil and below them was no signature. "Footpads do not care for lights, it is said," was in the letter, "and for an ambush attack nothing is more favorable than darkness and disguise. By all that is holiest, therefore, I venture to implore Your Majesty to postpone this accursed ball."

Essen, the court equerry, who had read the letter, leaned over the king's shoulder and remarked softly, "My advice is that Your Majesty should wear armor under your clothes or not go down into the hall."

"Are they to think I am afraid?" asked Gustav without the slightest touch of hesitation. "While I have been here they might have shot

King of Arts

me, if they had wanted to. I make no inquiries. If it is true that certain men seek my life, they will get to me at last in any case. Do you really think, baron, that there are enough people down there for one of them to commit regicide?"

With that he put on a little white mask, which covered his eyes but left mouth and chin bare. Anyone could recognize him at once from a distance, when immediately afterward he came down into the hall. On Essen's arm he went forward toward the stage along a row of boxes. Crosswise on his head he wore a great three-cornered hat. His thin silken cloak fluttered so that the star of diamonds flashed on his breast.

He noticed that a very tall fellow in a black cloak followed behind him. He nearly turned around and had the man arrested. It was Ribbing. Instead he stood still and jested charmingly with a little beauty who sat under an *oeil-de-boeuf* twittering with one of his cavaliers. He then vanished with Essen for a few moments into a side room where a number of the guests were solacing themselves with refreshments. The black cloaks hastened to gather outside the door, and when he returned, he was stopped by the crowd. The hour had come.

It was on the stage itself, a few steps in front of the left wing. Here stood the prince of plays

Swedish Chieftains

and masquerades in the midst of the theatre world which had so much fascination for him that he had often forgotten where the real world began. As before he held Essen's arm. Wherever he turned he saw only masks and eyes. The air was so cool that breath was visible. A few steps farther on the orchestra began a dance. Heels clacked on the inlaid floor, and flutes and strings resounded softly and pleasingly. The light from the small chandeliers could but half penetrate the dusk of evening, which peered down above him between the painted ceiling decorations, ropes, pulleys, and theatre canopies.

Cautiously Anckarström edged behind the king, drew out the pistol from under his jacket and pulled the trigger. The weapon fell from his hands at the same instant. He tried to lift the knife and strike so as to finish the deed, but his hand failed him, and the knife too fell from his hand. A faint report was heard, and up into the brocaded canopy slowly rose a puff of smoke. The dancing couples continued to bow and courtesy in the quadrille, supposing that this was but some ordinary prank of the masquerade.

"I'm wounded! Seize him!" cried the king, and Essen looked wildly about among the mysterious masks. The dance music was still playing, and few suspected that Gustav III had just

King of Arts

received his death-wound in the theatre he had built as a temple to the muses. A young man drew his sword and made way for the wounded man between the black-cloaked maskers, who cried "Fire!" Then a strong voice was raised with the command: "Shut the doors and let nobody out!"

With mask in hand, leaning heavily on Essen's arm, the king went up to his little cabinet and lay down on the divan. "Look how my fat Hallman is puffing!" he jested, when his royal physician at last arrived and, out of breath, began to undo the bloody garments to inspect the wound. "Understand," he added in a severer tone, "that a king ought to know his danger, and you must speak it out unreservedly!"

When his friend Armfelt rushed into the narrow little room, he held out his hand to him soothingly with the words, "Do you remember, all my days I have had an uneasy foreboding about the month of March. You always laughed. But be a man as always, my good Armfelt. As an officer you have yourself proved that wounds may be cured." The spoilt favorite, who was wont to assume a protecting air toward others and never weighed an answer too carefully if it was only clever, stood dumb with consternation. Duke Charles too had been waked from his bed

Swedish Chieftains

and now tottered in with streaming eyes. His knees gave way, and two pages had to support him. "Some water for the duke," ordered the king, "or he will faint!" When he was finally carried down the stairs he said smiling, "They're carrying me in a procession just like the Holy Father at Rome."

Surrounded by people, the carriage rolled softly up to the palace. Other men in moments of pain and misfortune have longed for a quiet, solitary nook, but it was not to Gustav's taste that night to be carried to his usual sleeping-room. There was in the castle a splendid deluxe bed-chamber with pillars and paintings, which had not been used for twenty-six years. There it was that he had himself laid on the broad bed glittering with silver. After a sleepless night he held court there next day, and all the offended counts and countesses who had so long disdained his feasts hastened to gather, deeply moved, around his bed of pain. "I feel myself lucky in being wounded," he said, "since thus I have recovered my former friends."

Anckarström was arrested on the evidence of the gunsmith. In prison he heard one day all the city church bells unite their tolling. He knew then that Gustav III was dead. The clang of the bells forced its way to the various cells where

King of Arts

his fellow-criminals had been one by one locked up, and they too realized what it meant. The bold temper of the counts had long since disappeared, but one of the prisoners was harder to deal with. The grating of his room was stuck all over with yellowish-white spiders, which the officer of the watch, either in jest or to pass the time, had moulded out of candle-grease and stuck on hairs from their pigtails. Before a burning candle in this great nest of webs sat a spider who had finally caught himself in his own nets. This was Pechlin. Enigmatic and uncommunicative, he puffed at his pipe and smiled silently or denied all accusations, but for him the door of freedom was never opened.

Amid torchlight and tolling bells Gustav's body was carried to the Riddarholmskyrka. As the warriors of Charles gladly thought of their hero, so for a long time at their assemblies did the poets, artists, and their friends talk of the artists' king and his restless but brilliant days. They knew that he had unceasingly piled up bold and glorious plans and in his charts and papers had looked forward to new activities. He was like a tree which had not always grown straight, but which, untimely shattered, had never been able to show how wide its long branches might have spread.

Swedish Chieftains

NOTE

Charles XII had ruled without calling the Riksdag together. When he died without leaving direct heirs, the Riksdag used the opportunity to reassert itself. Charles's sister, Ulrika Eleonora, was crowned queen on condition that she renounce the absolute power which her brother had claimed as the right of the sovereign. Ulrika Eleonora did not reign long, for she persuaded the Riksdag to make her husband, Fredrik of Hessen, ruler in her place, and he was crowned in 1720. He was followed, in 1751, by Adolf Fredrik of Holstein-Gottorp, who was married to a sister of Frederick the Great of Prussia, the ambitious Lovisa Ulrika. This entire period is known as the "Age of Liberty," because the sovereign had very little to say, but the country was torn by dissensions between the political parties.

In Gustav III, the son of Adolf Fredrik and Lovisa Ulrika, who succeeded his father in 1771, Sweden again had a strong and gifted king. He successfully carried through a revolution by which he increased his own power at the expense of the nobles. The common people he won by his mildness. He abolished torture and barbarous punishments and proclaimed that Sweden was to be ruled by law. He also won military glory at the battle of Svensksund in which the Swedish navy defeated the Russians, in 1792. Gustav III is chiefly renowned, however, as "the king of arts." He introduced freedom of the press, established the Swedish Academy of Letters, and built the Swedish opera. He aimed to make his court an imitation of the French, and the Swedes still use the word "Gustavian" to designate the delicate and graceful style of architecture and house furnishings which became fashionable in his day. Gustav III's weakness was that he spent too much money and was not always prudent. The noblemen could not forgive him that he had curbed their power. They conspired against him and caused his assassination, 1792. He was then only forty-six years old.

The Hundred Years' Peace

THE GREAT REVOLUTION

“**B**ERNADOTTE, my lad, you ought to be a postboy,” muttered the postillions as they laid aside their whips. “You could soon drive a skittish colt as well as any of us. Unharness there, will you! And take a wash before you go home; you’re black as a gipsy!”

The postillions wiped their foreheads, for this was in the sunny town of Pau in southern France, and the air glowed. To raise their spirits a bit they whistled a catch, stuffed their clay pipes with rancid tobacco, and blew a puff of smoke over the boy, who hopped down from the coach and threw down the reins with an air of assurance. They did not object if he sometimes in mischief helped them to drive. Though he was a scape-grace whom nobody could control and had already managed to get a scar on the forehead under his curly, luxuriant hair, they liked his gay humor and handsome appearance. His nose jutted out sharp and crooked, and his dark eyes sparkled with fire. The girls who stood at the door looking on were nearly all a bit fascinated by him.

“Both my father and his father were postillions,” one of the coachmen continued his reflec-

Swedish Chieftains

tions. "A son should inherit his father's trade. That's the custom. So as for this fine young gentleman, it would be no fit work for him to sit and crack a whip. Take a wash then, I tell you, and be off home! Keep the straight road! His father is an attorney, and in proper time he'll be putting on his own attorney's robe."

This was also the wish of the boy's parents, and his mother, who was a serious and worthy woman, spared no admonitions to turn him in that direction. But Bernadotte shook his black locks discontentedly. How could he ever acquire the calmness needed to sit driving the quill and reading law books? He preferred to go to the nearest dance or to have a tussle with lads of his own years. "I believe I was born for a fighter," he used to say a bit grandiloquently; and when his father died, he took service as a plain private.

Delightedly he stuffed his recruit money into his pocket and went off to his regiment. Every morning, as befitted a brisk soldier, he got up in time to polish his boots and brush his uniform. He was careful of his outward style. This did not prevent him from enjoying with excellent appetite a bit of pastry or roast capon with his friend the cook in the governor's kitchen. Once when he was nearly surprised in the kitchen by the governor, the cook hurriedly put a white cap

Hundred Years' Peace

and apron on him and placed him among the scullions with a pan by the oven.

A little change of diet was perhaps good for him with his slender daily rations. Even as a sergeant he was paid barely fourteen cents a day. He felt proud as a favorite of fortune over each little promotion, and the stern grenadiers who had gone through many vicissitudes esteemed him for his agreeable manner, his punctuality, and his firm will. The soldiers observed with sure intuition that he was at bottom well-meaning and kind-hearted, though strict in discipline, and that the halo of something uncommon surrounded this slim, gigantically tall warrior without birth or rank.

He rose to be ensign and color sergeant. One day at Marseilles he asked for quarters with a merchant, Monsieur Clary, but the rich citizen did not care to receive into his house such a humble guest, a man who was not even an officer. He therefore sent away this stranger of the lower ranks without suspecting that eight years later he would come back as a general and, in state and high glee, wed Clary's daughter Desideria.

To become an officer at that time one needed a noble name. What did it avail a man of citizen birth like Bernadotte to build ambitious castles in the air? In the evening when he reclined on his

Swedish Chieftains

bunk, propped on his elbows and enfolded in clouds of tobacco smoke, he heard his elder comrades speak of incapable leaders with glittering names and of the autocratic court at Versailles outside Paris. "Brother," said a veteran, clapping him on the shoulder, "how would it suit your taste to be a king? Shall I tell you about Versailles?"

"I'm a republican," answered Bernadotte. "But go ahead!"

The veteran sat up and folded his arms. "When the king wakens of a morning," he said, "two princes come forward and help him change his shirt; no one else may do this. Then the royal household is brought in to look on as he washes. Then they open the closet door to fetch him clean clothes, and he puts on his vest and coat, and is powdered. Last of all he falls on his knees and recites a prayer. What do you think, brother, of getting into one's clothes in such style?"

"It needs a lot of patience."

"But think, Bernadotte, if you had silk stockings and could walk in a king's palace!" resumed the veteran. "His bed stands several steps up within a gilded railing. That's another thing, eh, from lying here on a bunk? Then if anyone goes through the room in the hours of

Hundred Years' Peace

the day, I'd have you know that he must bow and scrape to the empty bed just as before an altar. Have you ever seen anybody bow before your coverlet, lad? Yet in all appearance the great folk are strangely like us. They are all hard up for money. Will you believe me, the whole of France is in debt up to the hilt? And yet one of the queen's earrings is worth a fortune. She has jewels everywhere, on shoe-buckles, buttons, and hair. For a dress costume at court you could buy yourself a really fine little country estate outside Paris. There have been ladies, though not of the best reputation, who have had at their death forty-five silken dresses in their wardrobes, four hundred garments of linen, sixty bodices, and six thousand handkerchiefs. You'd be mighty glad, monsieur, if you had a single clout to wipe your nose with."

The way from the people to the heights was long and inaccessible, and the young warriors listened in astonishment to tales such as these. Nor could the monks and nuns who passed by on the streets with their crucifixes make their hearts beat as aforetime, for true faith no longer spread its life over the too-earthly countenances of the religious profession. Everywhere there was talk of abuses and superannuated customs, and a frightful revolution began to rumble.

Swedish Chieftains

Every day it grew in strength. The people took arms against their oppressors amid cries for justice and new laws, and the fleeing aristocrats implored foreign princes to send their armies against the unruly French rabble, who threatened to spread their conflagration on all sides.

Thereupon Bernadotte and his comrades enthusiastically bound on their arms the tricolor rosette, which was the symbol of freedom. "Fraternity, equality, war against the tyrants!" was the jubilant cry of thousands in the soldier bands which went forth to meet the enemies of France and the newly-won freedom. There was now no longer a question of birth, but of ability, and all at once the world stood open to the valiant. Bernadotte received his coveted officer's commission, and three years later rode in front of his brigade as general. Hardly anyone possessed such a magical influence over the men as he when he stormed forward and swung the sabre above his long fluttering hair. If the soldiers faltered, he would indignantly cut off his epaulettes in the midst of the bullets and threaten with blazing words that he would no longer lead such cowards.

Amid all this King Louis went about anxiously in the halls of Versailles. Like the kindly Adolf Fredrik in a different time he more enjoyed a

Hundred Years' Peace

heartly hour at his work-bench than to bicker with his ministers. In a little park shut in with walls the court ladies danced and disported themselves in peasant costume. Marie Antoinette, the slender and beautiful queen, led little lambs with silken ribbons or carried fodder to snow-white cows that wore silver bells. Through rare trees glimmered a temple, and turf-thatched shepherd cottages were mirrored in a quiet lagoon. There were dairies and mangers and a mill, but everything was built for play. When Marie Antoinette grew weary of the game, she gave the huts as dwellings for the poor.

In the circle of her special intimates often sat a young Swedish count, Axel von Fersen. They were just of an age, and she was attracted by his elegant manners and handsome exterior. She was gentle and pliant, but at the same time proud and contentious, and he knew that therefore she was hated by the people. Both of them loved refined manners and spoke with undisguised sorrow of the time that had now come. When they were apart they exchanged letters, and Fersen preserved those he received as the most precious mementoes. The queen was the loveliest and most exalted figure in all his thoughts and dreams.

One morning in October the palace was roused

Swedish Chieftains

by wild tumult and shots on the stairs, and Marie Antoinette had to flee from her bed in her night-dress. When Fersen looked from his window over the castle courtyard, it was filled with throngs of angry revolutionists. Starved women had armed themselves with broomsticks and pikes, ragged men brandished their knives, and the multitude billowed like a roaring sea. From that instant the Swedish nobleman was seized by an invincible loathing for the rough hands of the rabble, and he vowed never to desert the woman whom he had so enthusiastically admired, and who now in the days of revenge and persecution assumed for him a new halo around her high-born head. Before his eyes, she with her vacillating husband and little children was forced to get into a wagon and follow the mob back to Paris.

Soon there proved to be no safety in Paris either, and Marie Antoinette, who always acted with decision, finally arranged with her friend Fersen a secret plan for flight. One evening toward midnight the royal couple went out through a hidden door into the empty, silent streets. The king had disguised himself as a lackey, which fitted well with his jovial appearance, and the queen went as a simple chambermaid. The royal children were also there, and

Hundred Years' Peace

their governess posed as a traveling Russian who had the others in her retinue.

After roaming about for a time in small separate groups they were met by a four-seated carriage, on the box of which sat Fersen dressed as a coachman with the reins in his hands. All would have gone well had not the old habit of seeking comfort and making a display in the midst of peril been their undoing. For this momentous journey Fersen had provided a gigantic coach, which, harnessed to six horses, waited them outside the toll-gate. Into this they mounted, when they had driven to it in the carriage, and after a couple of hours' journey Fersen kissed the slender white hand of the queen in farewell and hastened ahead to Belgium with letters from the king.

There was an uprising in Paris next day, when the people heard of the flight. But the extraordinary coach had everywhere aroused curiosity and astonishment, besides leaving unusual wheel-marks in the muddy roads. To cap the climax one of the axles broke under the heavy weight, and it was a long time before it could be repaired. In the end the king was recognized, seized, and brought to Paris with his family.

Fersen managed yet again to visit the queen and her consort in disguise and then to steal away from the horrible city. The rabble there were

Swedish Chieftains

now shrieking for murder and executions, and blood dripped for days together from the lofty scaffold. The prisoners in their dungeons tried like true Frenchmen to drive away their dark thoughts with games and dancing and masquerades, but when the day dawned, the condemned had to mount into the tumbrels. Even the king was carried out to the square and beheaded.

Pale with emotion, Fersen learned from newly-arrived fugitives that Marie Antoinette had been sent to a dungeon, where she sat surrounded by guards who drank, played cards, and mocked her with their coarse witticisms. And the way thence led her at length to the guillotine.

Night and day he saw in his thoughts her bleeding head lifted by its whitened hair in the hand of the executioner before the multitude. This grisly sight obsessed him, and his heart grew cold and empty after she was no longer among the living. Sorrow made him ill, so that he grew old prematurely and was utterly unlike his former self. His manner also changed, and became languid and haughty. He was a noble of ancient lineage, and when he saw the unkempt fellows who bawled around the tumbrels and finally came to rule all Paris, he did not understand the time in which he lived.

Hundred Years' Peace

Meanwhile with the years the fame of Bernadotte flew far and wide, including not only his military genius but his moderation and justice towards his enemies. But he was not alone in reputation. A whole row of talented men with ordinary names earned their way up as he had done, and Europe resounded with amazement at their exploits, but trembled as well at the whirlwinds that rose in their track and shook the ancient regime to its foundations. Most hated and idolized was Napoleon Bonaparte, a poor nobleman who with the help of his victorious sword made himself the leader of the French and more and more cowed the world beneath his will.

To him Fersen was now sent as Swedish ambassador, and in a splendid carriage and six with footmen in good livery on the steps he betook himself to the palace where the dreaded hero chanced to abide. There he beheld some of the renowned generals of whom he had heard so many warlike tales, and bowing attendants ushered him into the presence of Bonaparte. He proved to be a pallid young man, smelling strongly of eau-de-cologne, who surveyed the visitor coldly with piercing and commanding eyes. Fersen's aristocratic bearing displeased him, and Sweden was no longer a great power as formerly. It was not Gustavus Adolphus the victor of Breitenfeld who now bore the

Swedish Chieftains

sceptre, but Gustav IV, whom nobody took quite seriously. Bonaparte extended to Fersen his small, well-formed hand and bade him sit down, but spoke briefly and abruptly, until he finally rose impetuously and left the room. And indeed he bent his steps toward a wondrous destiny, for a few years later he set the imperial crown of France upon his head.

PEACE AT LAST

At the cradle of Gustav IV his grandmother, the ambitious Lovisa Ulrika, had said that he would never amount to anything. The prediction was soon fulfilled. In 1808 Finland, after an heroic resistance, was overwhelmed by the armies of Russia. The failure of Sweden to assist in the struggle was blamed on the king, who had in no way shown himself competent to inherit the Gustavian tradition. In the following year he was deposed, and long after he ended his days as an unknown exile in Switzerland. More violent was the fate of Fersen, whose haughtiness drew down on him the revenge of the Stockholm mob. He was ruthlessly murdered and his mangled body left in the street.

With the rising sentiment against autocracy there was no hope of making the deposed Gustav's son the successor to his throne. At first the talk was of nominating a Danish prince, but sud-

Hundred Years' Peace

denly the thought came that what the Swedes needed was not pallid royal blood but a great and renowned personality, a military hero of Napoleon's and of the new day. The idea grew so powerfully that the valiant soldier of the Revolution, Marshal · Bernadotte, entered Birger Jarl's Stockholm as Crown Prince of Sweden and from that moment at once took control of the land.

The French ambassador soon learned with astonishment that Karl Johan—as the Crown Prince was now called—was not at all minded to make the Swedes subordinate to the insatiable conqueror who had recently been his lord and emperor. There was, besides, a general belief that all was over for the Swedes and that the blood which stained the street at Fersen's murder was but the forerunner of yet grimmer deeds. People cut their yule ham in peace as before and prated of their various doings, but they were like burnt-out lamps. They could still flame up, for they were boastful and refractory, but things looked dark around them. Slowly the post-boats trampled the waves between Stralsund and Ystad with news of the great world. Five or six days the letter-sacks shook on the post-carts before they were opened in Stockholm. Then healths were drunk to the wonderful Emperor Napoleon,

Swedish Chieftains

cheers were given for his victories, and hands clenched in pockets at his defeats. But one morning came the news that the emperor's soldiers had marched into Swedish Pomerania, the last bit of land left from all the former conquests. Now the time had come for Karl Johan to act.

At a meeting with the rulers of Russia and Prussia, who had already resolved to unite against Napoleon, Bernadotte pointed out on a large map his plan for the campaign. England and Austria were likewise included in the alliance, which intended once for all to crush the dreaded giant.

Yet again did Swedish soldiers tramp the memoried plains at Breitenfeld; and at Leipzig, where the armies finally met, over half a million men stood in arms. For several days the conflict rumbled, Swedes and Russians for once fighting side by side. On the battlefield lay bleeding both long-haired Slavs, black-mustachioed Frenchmen and Italians, and fair-haired Dutchmen and Scandinavians. Karl Johan, who had a more distant purpose in view, spared his Swedes on the whole, but several regiments fought valiantly in the thick of the fray, where Adlercreutz, the hero of the Finnish War, sat his horse in calm determination. At last the French banners fluttered in wild flight around the beaten Napoleon, and Karl Johan proceeded into Leipzig to receive his mighty

Hundred Years' Peace

confederates. "It is three days since I have eaten anything but cheese and coarse bread," jested the Russian emperor, "but as Your Highness has had the honor of entering the city first, it is no more than right that you should provide our dinner to-morrow."

Still the French soldiers were Karl Johan's former comrades and their land was his fatherland. He therefore hesitated to enter with the victors upon French soil. Instead with his well-husbanded troops he forced the Danish king, who to the last had remained faithful to Napoleon, to renounce Norway in exchange for Swedish Pomerania. For the Danes this was to exchange a piece of pure silver for some uncertain small coins which straightway slipped through their fingers till nothing remained. But they had no longer any choice. The indignant Norwegians also cried from the opposite quarter that they themselves wished to decide their own fate. Then for the last time the Swedish war-drum sounded, and it was on the roads to Norway. But the strife was short, and the affair ended with a hand-clasp. Like friendly brothers the Norwegians and Swedes were to join thenceforward in a sound union.

An old dream had at last come true, and the aged Charles XIII, who had held the royal title

Swedish Chieftains

since the deposing of Gustav IV, embraced with wonder the dark-hued foreigner about to inherit his newly-won double crown. All gathered around him in eager hope. Charles XIII was, to be sure, a king of the ancient race from the time of Gustav Vasa, but he had now nothing to look forward to but the grave. He tottered about so decrepit with rheumatism and feebleness that his voice could hardly be heard when anyone else was speaking in the room, and he had to be supported under the arms. He showed no ungraciousness toward his popular successor, but looked toward him with a kindly parting glance in the last moments of his life.

Though Karl Johan's way had passed over the battlefields of Europe, he perceived at once that what his two peoples now required was peace. He himself had seen quite enough of the misery of war. When the drum rolled it was now no more for warlike adventure. Warlike carpenters spread their white aprons about their loins and put on bearskin caps and luxuriant false beards that came down to their waists. Then they swung the axes to their shoulders. With music playing and an advance guard of jaunty apprentices the parade marched to the royal palace, where a silvery head was visible through the panes.

The icy winds felt bitter to a southlander, and

Hundred Years' Peace

big fires flamed in the palace grates. If the king went out, great snowdrifts rose up around his thin shining boots. But if the city was awakened some night by the tocsin of the fire-bells and the horrid clamor of the guards' drums, it was an ancient custom that the king should be present. His three-cornered hat could then be recognized at a swinging gallop above the heads of the crowd, and all began to elbow and jump between the fire-engines and the water barrels to get near him. How often had ashes and sparks not rained about him in the same fashion when as a young officer with sabre in hand he had stormed cities and towns! Like a thunder god he still looked on his horse amid the peaceful turmoil, and cheers resounded for Charles XIV.

It was, however, hard for the king to converse with his subjects in their own language. A couple of times when he was to make speeches, he tried to write the Swedish words according to their sound in French so as to pronounce them right. But he noted that this was a poor expedient, and he was not the man to have others smirk when he spoke seriously. His queen Desideria, daughter of the rich merchant who had denied him quarters when he had knocked as a plain color-sergeant, had also grown up amid other than Swedish customs. In her country it was usual

Swedish Chieftains

for the best people to rise late and live by the light of candles. One evening when she was driving to Haga and the moon rose blood-red across the water, she exclaimed delightedly, "O what a charming sunrise!" This did not prevent her from being beloved for her kindness as he was for his majestic presence, but it kept the Swedes from feeling as much at ease with him as with a native prince.

Gradually any voices of disapproval toward the king were silent, and all who approached him were enchanted by his personality. There were, besides, many great men to be acclaimed in his days. With the constellation of stars on his frock-coat Berzelius might have been taken for an ambassador, and a shining ambassador he was too, but from the free realms of knowledge. The man who bent his curly head to one side and by turns compelled the sullenest listener to smile, or himself sank into melancholy, was Tegnér. Wallin, the hymnodist, was always gloomy with a life-weary look, but with organ tones in his soul and voice. By their side Geijer was like a bright and tranquil summer day in the woods. Nor should the lyrist Atterbom, and Almquist, poet and novelist, be forgotten.

As a monarch of eighty years, Karl Johan had something of the priest in his slender figure and

Hundred Years' Peace

spiritual countenance. When he sat late at night with his inner circle, and the candles in their lustres burned down till they flickered, he would speak of his wonderful destiny and of how his life was beginning to grow shadowy. The listeners then recalled how powerless and dismembered the Swedes had been when he came. They could now hold up their heads again, and he, the former hero of battle, had as his best gift bestowed on them the peace that still prevails and will soon have lasted a century.

During this peace the Swedes little by little won a state of well-being which they had never reached before, and which perhaps in the end meant more for them than any far-off strips of territory on the opposite side of the sea. Slantwise across the realm from the North Sea to the Baltic a canal was dug; chisels rang on blocks of stone to construct long stairs of locks, through which vessels could be brought up from the lower reaches of water to the higher. Iron and ore were heaped up for export, and railway webs began to stretch through wilderness where hardly even Olov the Woodcutter had cut his way with his axe.

Swampy districts were drained, and agriculture flourished anew. A peasant of St. Erik's days would have much to ponder, if he could see our

Swedish Chieftains

mowing-machines turn their great humming wings and pile up the bound sheaves, as if such a piece of skill were the simplest thing in the world.

And yet but a short time ago one might come upon a person here and there who could not read his own birth certificate or write his name. Now one must seek far for such old folks, for it was decreed that at least one school should be maintained in every parish, and the Swedes are better grounded in books than most other peoples.

In the old hall of the Riddarhus may still be found Gustav Vasa's ivory chair, on which the presiding officers of old were enthroned at the assemblies of the nobles for the Riksdag. The walls are still covered with copper shields on which the old crests are painted, and if a draught plays upon them, they rattle like armor. But the time is past when high-spirited lords displayed their oratory there. Without any bloody partisan war the Estates renounced their authority, and instead was established a parliament of two chambers, to which worthy citizens could be elected without reference to their social class. The farmers rose to be a mighty group, and then it was the turn of the day laborers to improve their position, and women began to come into more and more prominence in political life. Meanwhile the union with Norway was broken. But

Hundred Years' Peace

there is to be no account here of things as they now are, only of what befell in the past amid the conflicts that built up all of our present culture. These were fought out by the whole people together, though we know so much more of a few famous men than of the thousands of others who lie in churchyards without cross or stone.

Many heroic deeds have illuminated the conflicts, and these assure us that great achievements shall never be lacking as long as a people has the will to perform them.

NOTE

In the storms that swept over Europe at the time of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, Sweden, too, underwent many changes. Gustav IV Adolf, the weak, incompetent son of the brilliant Gustaf III, was deposed in 1809 without making much resistance, and spent the rest of his life abroad. His uncle, the brother of Gustaf III, was made regent and shortly afterwards was crowned as Charles XIII. On June 6, 1809, he signed Sweden's new free Constitution, which still, with some changes, is in power.

Charles was unable to retrieve what had been lost through earlier mistakes in the Finnish War, and was obliged to conclude the Peace of Fredrikshamn, in 1809, by which all of Finland was ceded to Russia. It is the most disastrous peace Sweden has ever concluded. In 1814, however, Norway became united with Sweden under one king, and this union, which put the whole Scandinavian peninsula under one sovereign, again strengthened Sweden's position abroad. It continued until 1905, when it was peacefully dissolved.

As Charles XIII was old and had no children, it was neces-

Swedish Chieftains

sary to chose an heir-apparent. In 1810 the French Marshall Bernadotte was made successor to the throne and came to Sweden. He was crowned king in 1818. His reign inaugurated a period of peace on the Scandinavian peninsula which has not since been broken. His descendants still occupy the Swedish throne.

Ura-Kaipa's Tomb

A CLOUD rose in front of the sun, and pines and grasses swayed before a storm-gust and pattering rain.

All at once the disc of the sun shone forth from the mist, first as a pale circle, then in the full glory of its beams, and the rain ceased. All things glittered and twittered and sang in a new-born world, where there was no death. Squirrels hopped on spruce branches, which threw a heavy shower of gleams from their wet needles, footsteps pattered on the moss, and fresh, clear children's voices chimed in with the joy of the woods.

It was a band of young folks out on a ramble, who had just been seeking shelter a while under the lofty trees. And behold! by a broken and splintered fir there stood in the expanding radiance a tomb of piled-up boulders with a great slab for roof.

"This must be Ura-Kaipa's grave," exclaimed a half-grown youth, laying his hand firmly over a corner of the slab.

"Karilas, Karilas!" came as a whisper from beneath the slab. "From the voice I already recognize the Yellow-shining People. Karilas, Karilas!"

But the whisper was so light that hardly any-

Swedish Chieftains

one but the youth caught the words. It sounded more like the rustle of the subsiding wind.

Silver-gray moss covered the stones, and on the slab were still visible the narrow grooves in which slaves and kinsmen had continued to burn the funeral resin after the burial feast. On lonely nights they fancied that they often heard the dead chieftain step out over the rattling shards of the broken jars, blowing a shrill bear-whistle to begin the hunt. The wooden sticks had long since blackened under the kettle which they had left before his feet, and gradually, as the years went by, they themselves died off. Witches and other strange solitaires, however, did not tire of smearing the stones with fat and mumbling their incantations, and darkness lay heavy on the thoughts of men. But whenever storms arose in the heart and the dusk seemed deepest, the sun was nearest, and he who was most persevering in hope was he who was usually surest to be right.

Now the youthful band stood there dressed as is the style of our days, for it was in the present year. Raspberry thickets with ripe fruit climbed between the boulders, and the young lad's name was not Karilas, but he was of the race of Karilas and extremely like him. I am not quite sure that he was not you yourself, who sit and read these

Ura-Kaipa's Tomb

lines. And if it was not you, then go out into the woods or up on the heights with your friends; or go alone, for there you will find Ura-Kaipa's tomb.

It was no one but you whom he sought with his whisper, though you are growing up to be a free man and will never have yourself sold to be anyone's thrall. Something of you, something of your own being shared already in the labor and strife of your forefathers, just as something of you will always remain living in your descendants to the latest generation. Invisible, unborn, you were present when Karilas was bound on the stone of sacrifice, and you were among the pilgrims who took up their crosses and went to Jerusalem. If you had inherited the memory of your forefathers, as your soul and your face have inherited so many of their characteristics, you could point to the various narratives about the past which are in this book and say: "Here it is all properly told, but there the story has strayed from the path. That wasn't how it happened. I know how it was."

But as it is we know nothing else of the past than what we can gather from traditions and documents. Often it seems to us that men were as though possessed by evil spirits when they fought so bloodily for power—power to oppress,

Swedish Chieftains

power to take arms against their superiors, power over both land and air. Yet from the midmost tumult of the strife were stretched always hands—and those the strongest—toward something imperishable, toward that which was right and true. Bend in over the tomb and talk with old Ura-Kaipa! When you grow accustomed to the dark, you will soon see how he sits looking with half-closed eyes toward the sunlight and holding out his hand to you, while he whispers his melancholy, “Karilas, Karilas!”

Tell about Ansgar, the first Christian missionary, and Master Olov, and why so many candles are lighted at Christmas. Far off lay the country and the sea foamed along the rocky shores, which strangers were loath to approach with their ships. Men often took up their weapons and went forth to fight the stranger on his own ground. Who could then foretell that the stubborn warrior folk of the North would finally be the first to consecrate the new age with a flourishing century of peace? Tell Ura-Kaipa all there is to tell. Let him divine how things are going on the earth. Relate how you can press your ear to a trumpet and hear some one else talk from several days' journeys off, or distinguish a murmur of words and sounds sent out from various cities and homesteads, as if men were ever coming nearer one

Ura-Kaipa's Tomb

another and becoming more and more united into a single great entity. Relate how day by day we build up each community, letting what is superannuated fall and raising new structures, so that the whole in its completeness may be many times more marvellous than all the buildings which the forest bees have reared with their constant industry. You know so much more than did Ura-Kaipa, who could not even count his own stone axes. Tell of how things look on the sun and moon, that the earth is round like a ball, and that people live on the opposite side! I fear that the melancholy man of the forest will turn away in suspicion and annoyance, saying, "Ura-Kaipa is a wise man. Ura-Kaipa does not let himself be persuaded that men can go with their feet uppermost like flies. Go your ways and do not disturb his sleep in the grave with such child's babble!"

And then you may observe that much has become different, but that much is still the same. Ura-Kaipa could shed tears as do we, and as we he could pine and yearn. He could stand grim and hard at the stone of sacrifice, but in the darkness he could still in his dusky way see the difference between right and wrong. Softly, slowly all things about us change, as the woods grow even when we sleep. We are still but part-way on the road, which grows long. Outer things

Swedish Chieftains

change soonest, most slowly our own hearts. And yet that is the change which is noblest. This is the first and last that we learn in our wandering over all the dead bones that weather in the glimmering night of history. The shy and reticent voice of truth within us was always the hardest to follow. Listen, however, to that voice as we turn home from Ura-Kaipa's tomb. Strive to become a great and good man, a hero, not only where the eyes of the many follow, but equally in the silent moments when no one sees you! Every hour well used shall be reckoned by Time as good and be laid with the ring of true gold among the thousands of others in the treasury of eternity.

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